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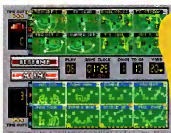


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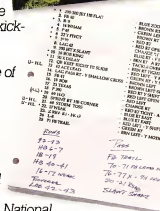
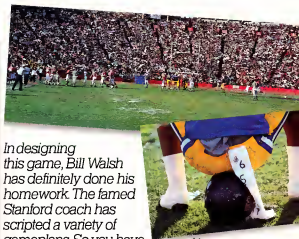
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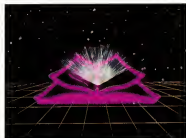
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• EG Interview - Daryl Gates

You read it right! Gates is lending a hand in developing the next Police Quest game. Sierra has enlisted the former police chief of Los Angeles for his expertise in the field. EG gets the priority info on how this occurred and what to expect from the upcoming game. 52

About the art—We at EG would like to thank the following artists for their contributions to this issue:

Thanks to the folks at LucasArts for the cool Star Wars art — Cover

Eric Curry — All department logos, and various photography

Chris Spoken — EG helpline

ANOTHER GRATUITOUS ADVERTISEMENT

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What the Reviewers Say!

- ✱ "the player is 'there' like no game I've ever played..."
- ✱ "the sound and the visual action, is frighteningly realistic..."
- ✱ "I can't remember a game making such effective use of perspective and sound and thereby evoking such intense physiological responses from its players."



POWER ON!

Sense and Censorship

Sega's announcement of a rating system for video game violence, and the much publicized protests about some scenes in **Night Trap** (Sega CD) have revived the debate over regulation of video game content. Both sides have valid points, which makes this the most controversial, and potentially explosive, question facing electronic gaming today.

As a professional writer and editor, and a firm believer in the Bill of Rights, I am 100% against any form of censorship. This country is built on the unfettered exchange of ideas, and I get nervous when anyone tries to interrupt or limit that.

Yet I also sympathize with parents who are concerned about their kids. Many have neither time nor inclination to thoroughly play each new release, assuming they could wrest the machine away from their son or daughter. They're looking for help in making decisions.

Some justify censorship with the claim that teenagers buy most of the video games, since our society often makes special provisions for minors. Examples include prohibitions on the sale of tobacco and alcohol, curfews, and the current motion picture rating system.

Though I understand the concern, I am forced to say that the flak over video game violence is a bit overblown. With allowance for atrocious over-acting, you can see something like **Night Trap** any evening on television. Compare **Night Trap** to the horror and slasher movies aimed at an even younger audience. Theatrical movies are much bloodier and more graphic.

I'm not competent to render psychiatric opinions, but I have never met a video game player who had any trouble distinguishing the difference between an on-screen explosion and one in the real world. Said one game designer, as we looked at his new World War II combat cartridge, "I don't think war is a big problem as long as we confine it to the game screens." Still, it's possible that ultra-violence in games is a small contributor to overall desensitization of people toward such extreme actions.

Reluctantly, I have come to the conclusion that a rating system for video game cartridges is a reasonable compromise. No regulation would be ideal, but guidelines for parents would certainly be preferable to outright censorship.

In the haste to protect our children, however, we must not create a bureaucratic monster. Unless the standards are administered in a fair, uniform and orderly manner, it will cause the kind of chaos that would leave the field open for self-appointed guardians of public morality to shackle the first amendment in chains of ignorance and narrow mindedness.

If video gaming is to be saddled with a rating system, then we'd better have a neutral administering body that can set standards for the whole cartridge field. Letting each company determine the ratings of its own products would be deceptive and confusing. A publisher could arbitrarily give a game the most permissive rating, even though a very similar game from another company carried a violence warning. And how many companies are going to pin a rating that might significantly reduce sales to young players on a cartridge that is, perhaps, slightly into the gray area?

Another must to avoid is making the standards ridiculously harsh. Video game ratings should be on a par with movie ratings. That will provide a quasi-objective benchmark that will keep censors from overly restrictive judgments.

A Rating System is, at best, a necessary evil. If we're going to have one, let's at least try to have the most intelligent one possible.

— Arnie Katz

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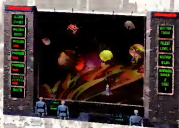
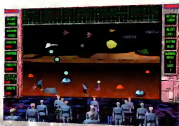
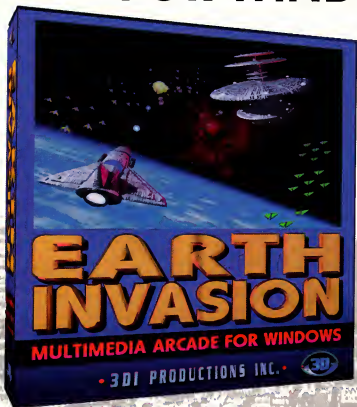
Ken Williams, Systems Coordinator

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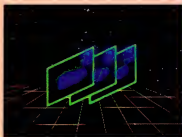
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FEEDBACK

Letters From Our Readers

Gaming Off-Highway

The discussion of the "Digital Highway" in the August **Electronic Games** 'Power On!' was interesting; I've been expecting something like the Highway for a few years now.

One thing may very well slow its progress a bit. I quote: "...the digital highway eliminates physical handling of ... electronic software ..." In other words, there is no need for cartridges, or the boxes and instructions.

This will dampen the enthusiasm for some, as there is a certain pleasure in holding a product in your hands. Sure, I can play chess over a computer network, but it's still more fun to play with a marble set, eye-to-eye with my opponent (at least that could be accomplished with cameras). I could play an electronic version of Rubik's Cube, but it is more enjoyable with the maddening piece of plastic in my hands.

Also, speaking as a collector, it won't be as neat to have a collection of disks that I downloaded and hand-labeled as would have a shelf full of carts and the box art that sold them. As a compromise, perhaps software companies would also download labels to be printed out and affixed to my disks? At least there would be some uniqueness then.

I stand somewhere in the middle of looking forward and looking back—I think the highway is a good idea and perhaps even inevitable, but I feel some remorse for what may have to be given up.

Russ Perry Jr.
Omro, WI

It might be some time before the full digital highway is built, Russ, and there will be other changes in the industry before it is implemented, but your points here (and some further good thoughts on the potential for increased isolation of the electronic consumer, that we didn't have room to reproduce) are worthy of discussion. First, for a well-known electronic gaming fan, you're offering some rather subversive ideas here! You prefer hands-on chess or puzzles to the elec-

tronically synthesized variety? My my!

As to the boxes and documents, it's our impression that, like Sega's upcoming gaming channel, the digital highway will offer these items only for immediate use, like a rental—not for full sale. If so, then there would (hopefully) be no such shelves of disks on anybody's walls! If there is a sale option, perhaps there will be a download to printer option such as you suggest, or a mail-order approach. Anyone have alternative ideas?

Mortal Maturity

Many mature game players agree that the Super NES is the most sophisticated 16-Bit video game system currently available. We feel that the Super NES version of the arcade game, **Mortal Kombat**, will be substantially better than any other game system version of this game, granted that Nintendo does not remove any of the original elements, including the graphic violence. We realize that Nintendo of America has strong feelings about how this type of violence should be portrayed in electronic games. However, if they take into consideration the facts about violence, not only in video games, but in the world we live in, they will notice that violence is all around us. For instance, the daily news does not think twice about showing and describing actual human carnage, Bosnia for example, to audiences including young children. Since **Mortal Kombat** takes place in a fictional setting, people will not regard it in a serious manner. One way of preventing young game players from purchasing **Mortal Kombat** without their parents' permission, assuming it would contain the original graphic violence, would be to place a warning label on the package.

I. Nginyo, M. Waclo, M. Zahurak
Johnstown, PA

We're certain Nintendo would appreciate your confidence in their approach, and your own viewpoint is certainly well considered. The concern that most people have who oppose the depiction of graphic violence, especially fictional, is

that it desensitizes its viewers and observers to the harsh reality of the authentic thing. How much more so for simulated participation in it, for which the only feedback is the pleasure of the competition? At least the news also portrays the pain and heartbreak in Bosnia and other locales of violence.

As you will have seen by the time you read this, and perhaps have read Bill Kunkel's review in the September **EG**, both SNES and Genesis versions are faithful to the original coin-op game—violence and all. See Arnie Katz's editorial in this issue for a discussion of warning labels and ratings on video games.

Breath Bated for Barcode Battler

I read the article about the Barcode Battler in your August issue. The product sounds great. I have been playing D&D for about 7 years and I think that a lot of other D&D players would like it too. I have a few questions though: When will it be out, and where can I buy it? Also, you said that you can use barcodes off merchandise. Do you mean cards you get out of magazines and other things, or just a barcode off anything?

James Hargis
Troutdale, OR

Well, James, experimentation is the key. Any UPC (Universal Product Code) barcode from any product that bears one should be usable. There are other barcode systems in use in some areas, usually shorter than the UPC, such as on some candy bars and tickets for transportation or events, which will not work.

The Barcode Battler's due for nationwide release this fall, probably in mid-October, but, as mentioned in the article, some locales have it now.

We do appreciate your cards and letters and read every one, but remember we can't respond directly. Please keep them coming to:

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EG HOTLINE

Compiled by Joyce Worley & Ross Chamberlain

HBO Tunes In Crystal Dynamics

Home Box Office invested in Crystal Dynamics, Palo Alto, CA, developer of 32-Bit CD entertainment software, whose first titles, **Crash 'N Burn** and **Total Eclipse**, are due out this fall. The pay-TV service now owns a 10% equity stake in the company.

HBO, a division of Time Warner Entertainment, joined Technology Partners and Kleiner, Perkins, Caufield & Byers as equity investors. Though this adds to Time Warner's interests in the area, it is said to be HBO's first stake in the

entertainment software market. Michael Fuchs, chairman and CEO of HBO said, "This deal will secure our position in the evolving multimedia landscape of home entertainment."

Crystal Dynamics' president and CEO, Strauss Zelnick, formerly president and chief operating officer of Twentieth Century Fox, said the investment represents a significant creative opportunity for both companies. "The biggest financial opportunity in entertainment is interactive software, which is why so many companies in broadcast, telecommunications and cable are getting in on the ground floor," he explained.

First Pix of Bubsy's Special

EG got an advance look at the character drawings for **Bubsy Bobcat's** Thanks-giving Day Weekend television special. Accolade is working with Imagination Factory, Inc., and Calico Entertainment, to create the half-hour animated show, which stars Bubsy, Arnold the Armadillo, the Bubsy Twins, and a "Virgil Reality" helmet that turns thoughts to reality.



The show will be part of a 3-hour block of kid's programming called **Kid's Day Off**. The special will be syndicated nationwide.



Aikman Q'backs Tradewest

Dallas Cowboy Troy Aikman, the 1993 Super Bowl's Most Valuable Player, is working with Tradewest to develop **Troy Aikman Football Signature Edition**.

The SNES game features season's stats for the players, and a full season of play with championship playoffs. Gamers will be able to choose coach vs. coach, player vs. coach, or player vs. player.

President Stars in 3D0 Game

3-D Games of Palo Alto, CA, is working on a CD game that lets players manipulate the President and other DC personalities via 3D0 technology (3D Games is not affiliated with 3D0). It's scheduled for release in the second quarter of 1994, and then will be translated to other CD formats.

Using video clips from the campaign, Bill Clinton not only plays his saxophone but spins it on his finger, at the player's command. **The Clinton Game** (working title) lets players participate in press conferences,

jam sessions, jogging, and other presidential activities. Some events are fixed, but the player controls certain responses to direct President Clinton's destiny.

Seaver Lasson, president of 3-D Games, will send President Clinton a

copy of the game, but Lasson reportedly has no plans to give him veto power over it.

Sierra to Leave Coarsegold

In an unexpected announcement, Sierra revealed that the company is about to move its headquarters from Coarsegold, CA, where it's been since it was founded over a decade ago, to the Northwest.

The new site will be somewhere in Seattle, WA, but the date of the move hasn't yet been released.

Some functions of the company, such as packaging and distribution, are expected to remain in Oakhurst, California.

Core Becomes Tengen Affiliate

Tengen signed Core Design Limited to an affiliated label agreement that should bring titles by the English publishing house to America.

Core develops and manufactures Sega software, including titles for the recently launched Mega CD in Europe, such as **Wolf Child** and **Jaguar XJ220**.

AT&T Logs On Sierra Network

In another move that puts AT&T deeper into the multimedia entertainment industry, the company purchased a 20% interest in The Sierra Network. The network will be renamed The Imagination Network. Contract provisions will allow AT&T to eventually assume controlling interest, and stipulate that AT&T will fund development of the network's content with a payment of \$5 million to Sierra.

In addition, AT&T will provide funding so that the Network will support access from the Sega Genesis, and from 3DO players.

Bob Kanner, AT&T's CEO for the Multimedia Products & Services Group, explained the plan. "Our group's charter is to pursue opportunities—even new industries—that result from the convergence of computers, communications, consumer electronics and entertainment... Consumer demand for interactivity goes beyond video games, and includes access to video and audio libraries, electronic shopping, news services and magazines, and virtual classrooms."

Global Golf Goes Back to Clubhouse

Icom Simulations put a hold on the release date for **Global Golf**, a CD-ROM project which will let players shoot holes in exotic locations around the world, due to delays which would have made it miss the holiday sales season.

In the works for some time, the game is expected to tee off under the Viacom New Media label early in 1994.

Deep River Wades Into CD Adventure

Deep River puts a different twist on multimedia with their latest CD, **Adventures**. No kidnapped princess, lost jewel, or

swordplay, but a collection of vacation travel plans, with video, photographs, text and audio to help the family find their ideal adventure. Search routines include type of activity, country or state, time of year, plus tour information, difficulty, and appropriateness for children. The company also introduced **Complete House** for residential design, and **Fractal Ecstasy** with fractal images and a fractal generator program, all for CD-ROM.

Sammy Drops Ping Pong

American Sammy ran into "irreconcilable programming difficulties" while working on **Battle Ping Pong**, so they dropped the game from their schedule. The Game Boy release was planned to be a realistic simulation of the



table-top sport.

Work on **Battle Blaze** and **Football Fury** for the SNES was not interrupted.

EG Readers' Popularity Poll

These games were voted the favorites in EG's monthly poll. Duplicate numbers represent ties.

Favorite Video Games

1. *Street Fighter II*, Capcom
2. *WWF Royal Rumble*, LJN
2. *Star Fox*, Nintendo

Favorite Computer Games

1. *X-Wing*, LucasArts
2. *Civilisation*, MicroProse

Favorite Multimedia Games

1. *Road Avenger*, Renovation

Favorite Coin-Op

1. *Street Fighter II CE Turbo*,

Epyx Plans Merger With Bridgestone

Epyx and Bridgestone Management Group signed a letter of intent to merge, and forged plans to extend their product lines into the multimedia area. According to Robert Campbell, President of Bridgestone, the merger with the historic software publisher is "a logical extension of the product line as we move into multimedia areas." Bridgestone currently markets video, audio and CD products.

William Langheer, CEO of Epyx, explained, "Bridgestone will bring the resources to develop and market high quality entertainment titles and is particularly important for the successful expansion of our popular Everbright Software label."

3 Games Bundled With Game Blaster

Advanced Digital Systems is bundling Broderbund's original **Prince of Persia** and two games from Velocity, **Jet Fighter II** and **Spectre Challenger**, with its **Game Blaster**, a



PC-to-video converter. The intention is to try to bring PC gaming into the video game players' market by allowing play on the big TV screen.

The Game Blaster is a small external device which converts 640x480 resolution, 256-color VGA output to a video signal. The

\$169 package includes the unit, games, power adapter, driver disk and cables. Optional items include an S-VHS cable and RF modulator.

Mario Turns Schoolmaster

Software Toolworks will introduce more products in the Mario Learning Series this fall. Nintendo's famous plumber is the tutor/companion in the line of teaching games that began with **Mario Is Missing!** (already available), featuring Luigi's search for the kidnapped Mario, through 25 major cities. **City Disk 1** has ten new add-on cities.

Mario's Early Years Pre-School Fun (music, counting, colors and shapes), **Mario's Early Years Fun With Numbers** (numbers, counting and math), **Mario's Early Years Fun With Letters** (alphabet and pre-reading), and **Mario's Time Machine** (history) are all scheduled for release during the fourth quarter.

Sierra Explores Outer Space

Sierra is looking to the future, and making plans. The company is currently working on a CD product, scheduled for April 1994, that uses all 3-D images plus lots of input from NASA. Tentatively dubbed **Build Mankind's Future In Space**, it's a strategic challenge to build an interstellar colony, and is expected to be a realistic simulation of the first colony.

Also, company spokesmen explained that they are currently designing for CD, then step-down games as necessary to support PCs and Macintosh. Third-party development work is being done on versions of some games for the Amiga.

Russell Means Stars in Under a Killing Moon



Filming on Access' **Under A Killing Moon** took a further dramatic turn, when Russell (Last of the Mohicans) Means took a starring role. He's shown here



Russell Means continues to shine in hot action films.

carefully going over some personal notes concerning the production of the upcoming film, and in full battle against detec-

tive Tex Murphy, played by Chris Jones.

Last month EG reported the casting of Margot Kidder as a bartender in the story.

The game should be ready in the first quarter of '94.

MouseMitt Now Fits Heavy Paws

The new line of computer gloves from Mouse Mitt, Intl. is specifically designed for people who spend a great deal of time on the keyboard. Keyboarders, like the original MouseMitts, are fingerless gloves, constructed of stretch Lycra, with extra fabric and padding to support the wrists.

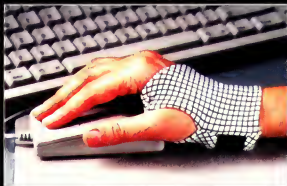
MouseMitt claims that the padding cushions the carpal bones, prevents chafing, and helps reduce strain on tendons. The heavy-duty Keyboarders retail for \$19.95 per pair. The original MouseMitts are \$9.95 each.

Wing Commander World Spawns SF Books

Origin's hit game is the inspiration and background for two science fiction novels, to be published by BaenBooks. In a gripping new novel by Christopher Stasheff and Bill Forstchen, *Wing Commander End Run*, the battle between Earthmen and the Kilarathi continues, with a surprise attack

publishers already have high visibility in our ranks. Even AT&T is prepared to spring into the middle of the gaming industry.

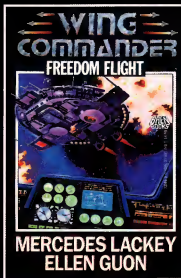
When giants start tossing around mega-sized chunks of money, there are certain to be casualties. Small design, development and publishing firms who fail to make powerful friends may go the way of the basement programmers of yesteryear. The wisest of the traditional software and cartridge manufacturers are scrambling to make alliances that



at their home world.

Wing Commander Freedom Flight, by Mercedes Lackey and Ellen Guon, sets a party of

high-flying defenders in the **Wing Commander** world, in a reissue of the space combat novel.



NAKI Starts Hotline

NAKI has a new consumer hotline that works in Canada or the U.S. Consumers can call 1-800-824-NAKI for product and dealer information.

Tribune Co. Buys Into Multimedia

The Tribune Company, Chicago, owner of newspapers, TV and radio stations across the country, and the Chicago Cubs baseball team,

acquired Compton's Multimedia Publishing Group, Inc., including Compton's NewMedia, Inc., from Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., for approximately \$57 million. Compton's NewMedia also publishes and distributes many CD-ROM titles in a variety of fields, including entertainment and education. Their software takes full advantage of the CD-ROM capabilities, and the Tribune Company obviously feels the future looks good for such software. No changes are anticipated in Compton's name, operations or base in Carlsbad, Calif.

Behind the Headlines with Joyce Worley Where Giants Walk

The giants are coming; they've already invaded the Realm of the Gamers. HBO, Paramount, Viacom...a growing list of movie makers are involved in interactive home entertainment. Sony, Panasonic, Mitsubishi...electronic manufacturers are gearing up equipment for the field. Random House, The Tribune, Time-Warner...print

will carry them through the coming war. The big guys may have the bucks, but they need the know-how from the gaming veterans.

The home gamer, will be the true victor. Projects funded by the giants will be bigger and more glamorous, hardware more user-friendly, market penetration deeper. What has been an isolated hobby will become a phenomenon.

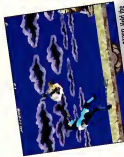
We've passed through our infancy. Perhaps the true golden age of gaming lies just ahead.



Throw Liu Kang's fiery rage into the deadly scenery of our 4-way scrolling arena in the Turbo Touch Battle and you can turn your Turbo 360 into the ultimate fighting machine and fashion your opponent.



Real designed action on the Turbo Touch gives you the edge! Call out your opponent, throw your opponent, and you can turn your Turbo 360 into the ultimate fighting machine and fashion your opponent.



Kung Fu Master is a battle with the Turbo Touch Battle and you can turn your Turbo 360 into the ultimate fighting machine and fashion your opponent.



Try your opponent with Kung Fu Master. The Turbo Touch Battle and you can turn your Turbo 360 into the ultimate fighting machine and fashion your opponent.



Try your opponent with Kung Fu Master. The Turbo Touch Battle and you can turn your Turbo 360 into the ultimate fighting machine and fashion your opponent.



Try your opponent with Kung Fu Master. The Turbo Touch Battle and you can turn your Turbo 360 into the ultimate fighting machine and fashion your opponent.



But one hero! The Turbo Touch gives you the edge! Call out your opponent, throw your opponent, and you can turn your Turbo 360 into the ultimate fighting machine and fashion your opponent.



Try your opponent with Kung Fu Master. The Turbo Touch Battle and you can turn your Turbo 360 into the ultimate fighting machine and fashion your opponent.

BATTLE TESTED IN KOMBAT

When you go into Kombat, you need a controller that's fast, that gives you all the action you want - easily and effortlessly, and that destroys your opponent, not your thumb! That's why you should be using the Turbo Touch 360™ to play Mortal Kombat™ and all of our other favorite games. The Turbo Touch 360 "touch sensor" allows your thumb or index finger to move effortlessly across the sensor plate - you don't have to push down. Objects on the screen move as fast as you move your finger, you've got real diagonal and true circular control, and you really feel like you're in the game. The payoff is being the ultimate fighting machine and fashioning your opponent... you know the guy using the old-fashioned control pad.

So, go into Kombat to win - go battle tested with the Turbo Touch 360.

The Ultimate Fighting Machine

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Turbo Touch 360™ & Mortal Kombat™.
The Winning Combination.

For Genesis, SNES, & Nintendo



TRIAx

For the name of your nearest Turbo Touch 360 retailer or to place an order, call **1-800-858-7429**.

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Sanctuary Woods does Once Upon a Forest

Sanctuary Woods Multimedia Corporation made a deal with Twentieth Century Fox to develop an interactive CD-ROM title based on the film company's forthcoming animated picture, *Once Upon a Forest*. The theme is natural resource management and environmental impact, told through the eyes and adventures of a wood mouse, a mole and a hedgehog, with full-screen, full-motion video that uses much of the movie's animation and sound. Digital techniques will give players maximum control over the characters, according to Scott Walchek, president of Sanctuary Woods.

Sanctuary Woods expanded the Hearn brand of educational titles when it acquired Mind F/X, Inc., Toronto-based producer of CD-ROM titles for the home education market.

Top Video Games as of July 13, 1993

The following figures are provided courtesy of Babbages.

Super NES

1. *WWF Royal Rumble*, LIN
2. *Mario Is Missing!*, Software Toolworks
3. *StarFox*, Nintendo
4. *Street Fighter II*, Capcom
5. *Batman Returns*, Konami
6. *Shadowrun*, Data East
7. *Vegas Stakes*, Nintendo
8. *Bubsy*, Accolade
9. *Super Black Bass*, Hot B
10. *MechWarrior*, Activision

Sega Genesis

1. *Mutant League Football*, Electronic Arts
2. *X-Men*, Sega
3. *RBI Baseball '93*, Tengen
4. *Bulls vs. Blazers*, Electronic Arts
5. *NHLPA Hockey '93*, Electronic Arts
6. *PGA Tour Golf II*, Electronic Arts

7. *Cool Spot*, Sega
8. *HardBall III*, Accolade
9. *Tony LaRussa Baseball*, EA
10. *Road Rash II*, Electronic Arts

Game Boy

1. *Super Mario Land 2*, Nintendo
2. *Super Mario Land*, Nintendo
3. *Kirby's Dream Land*, Nintendo
4. *NBA All Star Challenge 2*, LIN
5. *Yoshi's Cookie*, Nintendo
6. *Tetris*, Nintendo
7. *Wordtris*, Nintendo
8. *Baseball*, Nintendo
9. *Star Trek—The Next Generation*, Absolute
10. *Golf*, Nintendo

NES

1. *Kirby's Adventure*, Nintendo
2. *Tecmo NBA Basketball*, Tecmo
3. *Dragon Warrior IV*, Enix
4. *Battle Toads/Double Dragon*, Tradewest
5. *Tetris*, Nintendo
6. *Bases Loaded 4*, Jaleco
7. *Super Mario Bros. 3*, Nintendo
8. *Tecmo Super Bowl*, Tecmo
9. *Tiny Toon Adventures 2*, Konami
10. *Yoshi*, Nintendo

Sega Game Gear

1. *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*, Sega
2. *Land of Illusion*, Sega
3. *Taz-Mania*, Sega
4. *R.C. & Jerry*, Sega
5. *T.C. Grand Prix*, Absolute
6. *WWF Steel Cage Challenge*, Flying Edge
7. *Streets of Rage*, Sega
8. *Batman Returns*, Sega
9. *Super Off Road*, Virgin
10. *Outrun Europa*, US Gold

Sega CD

1. *Final Fight*, Sega
2. *Ecco the Dolphin*, Sega
3. *Batman Returns*, Sega
4. *Time Gal*, Renovation
5. *Jaguar XJ220*, JVC
6. *Adventures of Willy Beamish*, Sierra
7. *Road Avenger*, Renovation
8. *Night Trap*, Sega
9. *After Burner III*, Sega
10. *Sewer Shark*, Sony Imagesoft

Top Coin-Ops of August 1993

Figures courtesy of Replay Magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *NBA Jam*, Williams
2. *Mortal Kombat*, Midway
3. *Lethal Enforcers*, Konami
4. *Title Fight*, Sega
5. *Super Chase*, Taito
6. *Street Fighter II CE*, Capcom
7. *The Punisher*, Capcom
8. *Terminator 2*, Midway
9. *Final Lap 3*, Namco
10. *Fighter's History*, Data East

Best Deluxe Videos

1. *Stadium Cross*, Sega
2. *Virtua Racing*, Sega
3. *Lucky & Wild*, Namco
4. *Suzuka 8 Hours*, Namco
5. *Crime Patrol*, ALG
6. *Race Drivin'*, Atari
7. *Mad Dog II*, ALG
8. *Moto Frenzy*, Atari
9. *X-Men*, Konami
10. *Final Lap 2*, Namco

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Samurai Shodown*, SNK
2. *World Heroes 2*, SNK
3. *Street Fighter II CE*, Capcom
4. *Time Killers*, Strata
5. *In The Hunt*, Irem
6. *Neck N' Neck*, Bundra
7. *Shadow Force*, Technos
8. *Warriors of Fate*, Capcom
9. *Raiden*, Fabtek
10. *Fatal Fury 2*, SNK

Best Pinball Machines

1. *Jurassic Park*, Data East
2. *Twilight Zone*, Midway
3. *Tee'd Off*, Gott./Prem.

Flashback:

The Start Of Computer Gaming

It started during WWII, with the now legendary Whirlwind Project. Big as a house, Whirlwind was the first working computer, but there were many milestones before the age of gaming began.

In 1946 the University of Pennsylvania built ENIAC, usually credited as the first general-purpose computer. Remington Rand's UNIVAC 1 followed in 1951, and IBM introduced the RAMAC in 1956.

It took another 20 years for computers to come home. The first Apple was released in 1976, but it lacked a keyboard. In 1977, the Apple II had a keyboard and color graphics. That was also the year that Commodore introduced the PET, and Tandy introduced the TRS-80.

Next came the Atari 800, the Texas Instrument TI-994A, and Commodore's VIC-20. The IBM PC showed up in 1981, and the Commodore 64 in 1982.

No one knows who played the first game of Tic-Tac-Toe on computer, but we do know who introduced the first graphic-based entertainment. Working on MIT's mainframe computer in 1962, Steve Russell designed *Spacewar*, which used tiny blips of light to simulate spaceships and laser fire.

EG salutes the visionary men and women who pioneered computing. Without them, the games we play today would not exist.

4. *Addams Family*, Midway
5. *White Water*, Williams
6. *Creature/Lagoon*, Midway
7. *Street Fighter II*, Gott./Prem.
8. *Cue Ball Wizard*, Gott./Prem.
9. *Star Wars*, Data East
10. *Terminator 2*, Williams



A MATCH MADE IN HELL

COMING IN NOVEMBER



A Game by Virgin Interactive Limited. © Virgin Interactive Limited 1997

Wolfenstein

AN EXCLUSIVE 3-D EG PREVIEW

EG runs wild with the new SNES combat adventure.

The metal door clanks open...

A machine gun-toting soldier rushes toward you, a chilling war cry on his lips. You swing your machine gun in his direction, firing a hail of bullets. The soldier's gun barks, and a flash of red testifies to his marksmanship!

Then you hear his agonized scream as the bullets strike home and he crumples to the floor. You barely pause to take his extra ammo and search for keys that provide access to secure areas. Wealth and treasure beyond your imagination await behind secret passages, but you must battle the many foes and creations of the Third Reich in order to come out alive. If anyone can do it, you can.

That's the bread-and-butter action in **Wolfenstein 3-D**, developed for SNES. Id Software, which produced the award-winning 1992 PC title, has now adapted the first-person combat classic to 16-bit cartridge. Imagineer, which opened a U.S. office in August, will distribute the product stateside. Id president Jay Wilbur is confident that the U.S. edition will reach shores by Christmas.

The cartridge preserves the essence of

the computer version, though the developer has made a sincere effort to adjust game-features. For instance, the SNES **Wolfenstein** has a map screen, accessed by hitting the Start button. This shows where the hero, super-commando B.J. Blazkowicz, is on the current level.

Instead of one large quest with periodic minor sub-goals, **Wolfenstein 3-D** is divided into six missions. The game introduces each with a special screen. Fans of the floppy program will see virtually all the sections of the original game, but the design team has artfully recombined them in new and interesting ways.

The six missions are: Dresden Strike (terminate Hans Große); Operation Eisenfaust (kill mutant rats and Dr. Schabb); A Dark Secret (kill chemical weapons developer); Trail of the Madman (stop the Übermutant); Confrontation (destroy Death Knight and his legion); and Hister's Last Stand (kill the hated dictator).

At Nintendo's request, Id eliminated the World War II trappings. Blazkowicz now works for the Republic, and the enemy has become the Master State under the dictatorial rule of Hister. Once the firefights start, most players won't have any trouble hating this tyrant as fiercely as American GIs hated the guy

with the paintbrush mustache back in the 1940s. (No, not Charlie Chaplin. The other one.)

The play-mechanics are extremely simple. The gamer walks down corridors and around rooms with the direction button. Pressing X or Y while the hero is moving makes him run in the indicated direction. The longer the button is held down,



Treasure stores are located throughout the castle, and they really boost scores!

the faster the movement. The A button opens doors, even hidden ones. The Select button cycles through available weapons, which are fired with the B button. The L and R buttons let the commando strafe to the left and right.

Wolfenstein supports the Nintendo good mouse. While the controller is good, the Nintendo mouse works even better.

The main display shows the first-person view of the situation, with a line of status information at the bottom of the screen. When Blazkowicz collects treasures, keys, ammo, and first aid supplies, the read-outs reflect the success of his scavenging. Another difference from the PC **Wolfenstein** is that this hero can stockpile 199 rounds of ammunition, versus only 99. Like the original, the player earns bonuses by discovering all the hidden treasures and secret doors on a level, which encourages exploration instead of a single-minded pursuit of the winning objective.

The graphics are all right, but the scrolling and speed are excellent. Nintendo has asked for a bit of sanitizing, so victims no longer spurt blood, and mutant rats have replaced the enemy's attack dogs. **Wolfenstein 3-D** isn't quite as amazing on cartridge as it was on disk, but video gamers are sure to enjoy the high degree of personal involvement with this compelling shooter.

— Arnie Katz



If this were a perfect
world you'd be all thumbs.
That way you'd have more
moves, you'd have more
control, you'd have more
intense combinations. But
things aren't perfect. So if
you want all that stuff
you should either buy one
of our new arcade style

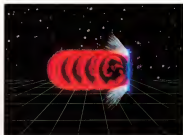
Sega™ 6-Button Controllers.



The Next Best Thing
To Genetic Mutation.

6-Button controllers
or start handling large
amounts of nuclear waste
and—well, hope for the
best. Personally, we'd go
for the controllers. They're
more reasonably priced
and a heck of a lot easier
to come by than a chunk
of plutonium.





INSERT COIN HERE

Highlights of Hi-Tech

by Jay Carter

Technology has always been the driving force behind the success and ongoing growth of coin-operated amusement games. This is true whether one looks at the many tangible advancements of the art form, or in regard to expectations and forecasts being expressed by those outside the scene. Specific to video games, and probably because of their emergence at a time when the entire entertainment field was going through a transformation of sorts, coin-op has tended to be a bellwether for visions of our future.

During the beginning of the video game boom, back in the mid- to late '70s, social commentary hit the media touting what many believed to be the almost infinite potentiality of the still embryonic medium. In fact, comparisons were regularly drawn to the evolutionary

path taken by feature films; from the first silent movies on through the introduction of "talkies" to technicolor and, now astounding, special effects-laden wonders.

Today, many of the similarities still exist when analysts and forecasters look at the role of video games. The result has been to look more closely at the inevitable merging of many different disciplines. And at the core of this convergence is technology with the belief that it might prove to be the long-awaited panacea many have hoped for to drive not just entertainment of dazzling interactive quality, but also information as well as access to goods and services.

Admittedly, in attempting to put everything into some realistic perspective, it would be overly simplistic and highly naive to assume that video games exist just for our leisure amusement where everyone is more concerned about secret moves and other hidden features.

Instead, we have to force ourselves to step back and look at the far bigger picture in order to identify the clues which reveal, in small bits and pieces, where we're ultimately heading.

This brief philosophical dissertation isn't meant to minimize what the impact has been from a playing public that has embraced a diverse assortment of games with an adoration, devotion and endless fascination. In fact, those behind the scenes recognize that the stakes are rapidly changing and what might want to be believed as only some flight of technobabble fantasy could truly become the foundation of a new world standard.

And it's all happening under the cloak of video game based entertainment, where developments in the home have encouraged us to demand not just better graphics and more sophisticated game play, but also more experiential applications of cutting-edge technologies from

the latest and greatest CD-Interactive to Virtual Reality and everything else in between.

For anyone following the various developments that are taking place on an almost daily basis, there is, in truth, a greater melding together of different disciplines today than there ever has been throughout the more than two decades that video games have been commercially popular. We're witnessing new alliances between the major film studios and entertainment conglomerates not just with a current generation of software developers, but also in the creation of new divisions given the task of tapping into this brave new world of video game attractions.

Interestingly, and maybe not so surprising, the inspirational spawning ground for



ideas and applications is still coin-operated video, although even this category is undergoing some dramatic changes when one looks at high-end technology and more interactive experiences. One example might be the dedicated environments that have begun to appear, such as the Battletech facility in Chicago, or Namco's Galaxian 3 Theater 6 which is a six-player space adventure video game played out in free-standing virtual reality-like theaters.

Each player has his own battle station that includes a seat and gunner controls and color-coded crosshairs on-screen to differentiate between combatants. What you'll encounter on screen is a combination of polygon and high-definition computer graphics of an outer space battle field. Maybe most impressive, to the extent that you feel as if you're part of an interactive movie, is that **Galaxian 3** projects its images onto two 11.0-inch screens and additionally utilizes a four-channel multi-speaker sound system that really immerses you into the action of what arguably might best be described as a high-tech shooting gallery.

Another area of interactivity that is gaining more and more attention is sophisticated simulators that have formed an attraction cornerstone for many of the theme parks around the world. At Universal Studios it might be the *Back to the Future* ride, while Epcot Center has its *Body Wars* trek that should conjure memories of the old *Fantastic Voyage* feature film.

However, downsizing has also become part of current developments so that we might be able to discover more of these types of attractions at the local family amusement center. One such venture finds Hughes Training Inc. and LucasArts joining forces to bring game players some outstanding interactive entertainment.

Mirage is a multi-seat capsule or "pod" as it's called (for pilot and co-pilot), which can be free-standing or net-



worked for multiple player installations. Based on advanced simulation and visual technology that was previously used exclusively for flight-simulator training, the system features real-time computer graphics and an expansive display system as well as a MIDI-based audio generation system for adventures that can range in theme and type of play mechanic or controls, and immerse you into a total experiential challenge.

Untitled at press time, one of the first games to emerge from this alliance finds players in the *Star Wars* universe. They are able to control a Rebel force X-Wing fighter against the evil Empire on a quest to find a valuable fluid called Ceela and take it back to a waiting tanker ship. Flight controls can maneuver you through an entire universe and laser weaponry keeps you on the edge of your seat from start to finish.

Taking yet another path from research and development in Virtual Reality is the work of Australian born Kyle Hodgetts and his company, VRS, which recently introduced its first upright game called **Virtual Combat**. Although on initial contact the unit might appear to be a conventional video game, the end result is anything but, due to visuals which are a mixture of polygon graphics, scanned images and computer-generated texture-map images, and the actual controls.

Players view the 3-D action through mini-screens in a periscope-type controller that also features trigger fire buttons for both bullets and the launching of missiles. Spectators can view what the player is seeing from the monitor screen. There are two modes available for players—manual or automatic pilot—with the former meaning that you must guide your tank in battle as well as destroy the

enemy, and the latter letting you just fire your way through the action.

Interestingly, in looking closer at the technology being applied in **Virtual Combat**, VRS offers a system that addresses three-dimensionality of objects on screen, position/orientation tracking and more complete interactivity. In fact, the computer can sense where you are, any point in time and determine which images to display while giving you full access 360-degree movement left and right as well as 90-degree movement up and down via a potentiometer. And while this first effort is a tank/combat battle, plans call for an outer-space theme as a follow-up title.

Emerging technologies are changing the face of coin-operated amusement entertainment. It's becoming more evident that things are changing and what we might encounter in the near future is limited, it seems, only by one's imagination of what is possible.

But despite these efforts we've just looked at, there still exists a new crop of more conventional equipment to draw and hold your interest, including Sega's sequel to a classic called **Outrunners**, Namco's **Lucky & Wild** two-player sit-down drive and shoot game, **Prime Time Fighter** from Taito and SNK's new **World Heroes 2** and **Samurai Showdown**. And pinball isn't too far behind with its own wonders, led by **Indiana Jones: The Pinball Adventure** from Williams, Data East giving new life to Schwarzenegger's **Last Action Hero** and Alvin G. & Company unveiling **Mystery Castle**.

So, is the best still yet to come? Absolutely, and we'll be setting our sights on the latest and greatest next time around. Until then, as always, keep on playing and have some fun.



The **Mirage** pod is capable of creating incredibly lifelike VR environments.

PLAY THE GREATEST ADV

FROM A WHOLE
NEW PERSPECTIVE!

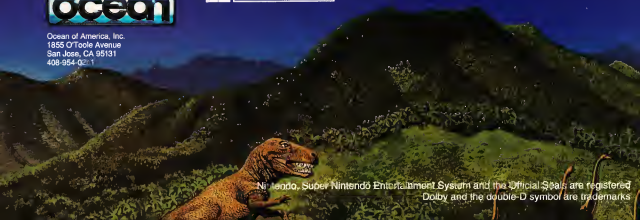
**This is first-person,
in-your-face,
eyeball-to-eyeball,
full-motion 3-D
action like
you've never
experienced
before.**

JP in 3-D.

If the movie shook you, Jurassic Park
for the Super NES will rip you apart.



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ENTURE OF ALL TIME...



If you thought the movie was hot... Wait until the razor-sharp intensity of full-motion 3-D graphics gets a hold of you!



Hey Dr. Grant! Never underestimate your opponent... Especially when he's 20 feet tall and weighs over seven tons.



Meet your chefs... The Raptor slices and dices you, while the Spitter waits to baste you in his venomous marinade.



No more plain polygons or simple two-dimensional sprites! Ocean's exclusive, technically advanced graphics engines deliver REAL 3-D dinosaurs in a solid, dynamic and fully interactive universe.



Triceratops is heading your way! Restore island security and re-arm the voltage gates. Remember: the only good dinosaur is a fried dinosaur.

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SUPER NINTENDO
ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

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Nintendo

AND GAME BOY





GAME DOCTOR

You Say Q, I Say A

It's birthday time here at EG, and even the Doc is getting a little tired of chocolate cake with vanilla-coconut icing. Still, this magazine you hold in your hands—the interactive entertainment periodical aimed at the thinking gamer—is celebrating the first anniversary of its birth with this issue while yours truly is partying on his 12th birthday. Twelve years and counting, guys and gals, and I couldn't have done it without you.

To celebrate, we're sending a special Game Doc Birthday Prize Packet to the author of each and every letter we print this month. So lest we squeeze a worthy petitioner out, let's jump right in:

Q: I'm a major Genesis fan and I wanted to ask about blast processing, DPA, and the rumored new chip that Sega is using on some upcoming software.

Also, I am going nuts anticipating the arrival of *Eternal Champions*. Can you tell me anything about it—megs, number of characters, special features, etc? I know these are a lot of questions, but if anyone can answer them, you can.

Joseph Plonski
Long Beach, CA

A: No problema, Joe. Blast processing is a special process Sega developed whereby characters can be launched at high speed in a single direction for short distances.

DPA is Dynamic Play Adjustment, a feature which brings the basics of Artificial Intelligence to video games. DPA analyzes the play of the gamer and makes on-the-fly adjustments based on perceived strengths and weaknesses. DPA promises to significantly extend the play value of any game on which it is used, since it will take gamers a lot longer to master a game which is constantly evolving, adapting the difficulty to the player's learning curve.

The new chip Sega will be introducing on the Genesis version of its coin-op hit

Virtua Racing is essentially a speed enhancer. And since the Genesis is already the fastest system around, this new chip might be able to break the sound barrier. And yes, this chip will be made available to third party Genesis publishers.

Finally, you inquire about *Eternal Champions*. Here's the lowdown as given to the Doc by Al Nielsen himself. The 24-Meg, 11-character game will feature stop-action, instant replay, and slo-mo, and it will boast 35% larger characters, 35 moves, battle training and a 30-player tournament mode.

Whew. Pretty intense, huh? I think you'll like it, Joe.

And now a note from one of the Doc's favorite correspondents, Whimsical William Simpson, co-host to that medical maven of novelty music, Dr. Demento (who, thank heavens, is finally being broadcast here in Las Vegas!). Take it away, Will!

Q: Just a note of congratulations on the 10th issue (already?) of EG. I am constantly impressed with [its] quality and sophistication.

In the July issue, I was reading your account of "Easter Eggs" and, being a self-proclaimed video game purist (read: "viliot"), felt compelled to comment. The Atari 2600 game *Adventure* was indeed the Easter Egg ground breaker, but it was Warren Robinett who secreted his name in a remote corner of the playfield. The "HW" initials to which you referred were, if memory serves, tucked away in *Yar's Revenge*.

William Simpson
Los Angeles, CA

A: And right you are, oh wise and whimsical one, it was indeed Mr. Robinett who hid his initials in *Adventure*, thereby creating one of the great traditions of electronic gaming.

The "HW" initials, by the way, belonged to Howard Warshaw (though my

spelling may be off) who, I believe, was also responsible for the 2600 versions of *Pac-Man*, *E.T.*, and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Q: I heard a rumor recently that seemed so unbelievable I had to write to The Doctor to get the story straight. Is former Los Angeles Police Chief Gates—the man whose policies, in my opinion, helped bring about the riots that followed the Rodney King decision—the star of the latest *Police Quest* game? I have a lot of respect for Sierra and, if this is true, can you even venture a guess as to what the motivation was behind this? Also, what happened to the original creator of the *Police Quest* series?

Steve E. Richardson
Los Angeles, CA

A: Ex-Police Chief Daryl Gates was involved in the development of *PQ 4*, Steve E., though to say he's the "star" of the game isn't quite true, either.

For those of us who didn't live in L.A. during Chief Gates' tenure, it's probably true that he's best known for having been the Guy in Charge when L.A. ignited in the wake of the first King decision. It's also true that he's a veteran police officer who knows the streets of L.A. and is an ideal candidate to provide expertise in the matter of procedure.

In fact, *Police Quest IV* differs from the earlier games (which were authored by Jim Walls, who left Sierra over a year ago to start his own software company, Tsunami) in that it takes place in a real, major American city and it focuses on the police procedural elements to form the nucleus of the game play. The user is cast as a detective in the Major Crimes Division whose partner has been killed. Gates is not an active character in the game itself.

As to why Gates was chosen, that's an interesting point. The Doc was told by more than one source that there was considerable in-house opposition at Sierra to using Gates on this project. This

"I'M NOT A FIGHTER PILOT, BUT I CAN PLAY ONE ON T.V."

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GAME DOCTOR

may or may not be true, but I'd bet that it was Ken Williams' decision all the way. Ken likes game ideas that contain the seeds for their own hype. A product like this one is bound to draw press coverage, which is both cheaper and more effective than paid advertising.

Q: Is LucasArts planning on making **Super Return of the Jedi**? When will the Interplay **Clay Fighters** game come out? When will the SNES CD be released?

Ryan Hollingsworth
Greenacres, WA

A: Well, Ryan, given that JVC/LucasArts have already produced **Super Star Wars** and **Super Empire Strikes Back** for the SNES, it'd be pretty odd if there wasn't a **Super Return of the Jedi** now wouldn't it?

Clay Fighters should be out within a month or so of the release of this issue, but I wouldn't hold my breath waiting for the SNES CD since we checked with several of the top Nintendo third-party publishers and none of them even had a development system yet.

Q: I have recently attempted to use my SNES Game Genie with [Nintendo's] **Star Fox**. To my surprise, after punching in random codes, the screen stayed black. I then tried the game with no codes, and the [Game Genie] switch off. Still nothing.

Is Nintendo making its games incompatible with the Game Genie? Or [do games containing] the SFX chip have to be attached directly to the SNES deck to work its wonders?

Michael Page
Connell, WA

A: Nintendo sort of pulled a fast one on Galoob with **StarFox**. What Nintendo basically did was install a pair of extra contact pins on **StarFox** for which the Genie has no female inputs.

Obviously, Galoob is aware of this problem by now, but there isn't very

much it can do. Even if Galoob released an updated version of the Genie for SFX games, there's no guarantee that Nintendo won't simply change the configuration.

In any case, the SFX chip being used in the next Nintendo game cartridge (Trax) is reportedly different from the chip used in **StarFox**. So, for the time being, there doesn't seem to be much that Galoob can do about the situation.

By the way, we got several reports similar to yours this month, Michael, and the others reported that they got sound but no video. What about you? Or didn't you get audio, either?

Q: I am one of those weirdos who likes to play music from my CD-ROM games on my normal [audio] CD player. Of course, this is done despite all those warnings from T.T.I. and Working Designs on how dangerous this is. [But my] CD player actually plays the music tracks perfectly and even when it gets to the data tracks, the CD player isn't hurt.

Is there really any danger in this? If so, what could happen and what are the chances of it happening? Thanks.

MJ, The Technology Head
Houston, TX

A: Interesting question, MJ. I myself have accidentally or otherwise run game CDs on an audio system without any ill effects. Companies like T.T.I., however, are simply covering their hindquarters against that one time in a thousand when the data code blows out your sound system.

According to T.T.I., the problem can occur because the data code often runs back at an extremely high pitch—sort of like the sound you hear after dialing a fax phone number or when two computers hook up via modem. This electronic squeal can be quite intense, and if your sound system is really cranked, that high-pitched code could do some serious damage to your amp and speakers.

So, while the exploding CD scenario doesn't seem to happen often, all it really takes is once, right?

Q: We all know that a large number of popular games sold in the U.S. are imported from Japan and subsequently Americanized. Are there any games of American origin that have gone the reverse route and become popular in Japan?

As a concerned consumer I would prefer to support American owned-and-operated companies. Is there a list of U.S. made games and their companies avail-

able? Could you list just a few currently popular games of American origin?

Larry C. Carriveau
Sheboygan, WI

A: Boy, I really want to thank you folks for keeping the calibre of questions so appropriately high for this anniversary issue!

The fact is that right now the Japanese companies dominate the video game business in terms of both hardware and software. On the hardware end, of course, the U.S. isn't exactly pumping out a lot of competitive products, and even if we were, Japan's restrictive trade laws make it extremely difficult for American owned and operated companies to compete, in Japan, against Japanese firms. The same is true with software. Most non-Japanese produced video games which become successful in Japan do so only after they are licensed by a Japanese company.

This is not to say that there aren't any popular American-designed games in Japan. Many RPGs, especially Origin's **Ultima** series, enjoy tremendous popularity in Japan—although they are published there by FCI. Nonetheless, when **Ultima's** creator, Lord British, travels to Japan, he is invariably treated like a rock star or, more appropriately, visiting royalty.

Over at Sega, meanwhile, more and more Genesis products are being produced in America, under the watchful eye of Sega of America. In fact, rumor has it that the next Sonic game, **Sonic Spinball**, will be developed here in the USA.

Popular games today come from all over the world. From British developers being released by American publishers for Japanese game systems; from American divisions of multi-national corporations; and even from that last bastion of low-technology, Mother Russia. That's right, here's a country so poor that it costs an average citizen the equivalent of two year's wages to buy an obsolete PC and where telephone lines are so ragged that modems are essentially impractical technology. And yet it produced the men who created **Tetris**, one of the five most important games of the past five years.

I don't know of any list showing which software companies are American-owned—the main U.S.-based video game publishers are probably Acclaim, Electronic Arts, and Accolade.

Remember to send those letters, insults, etc., to:

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FANDOM CENTRAL

Shopping for Fanzines

by Arnie Katz

To celebrate the first anniversary of **Electronic Games**, and therefore this column, I'll short circuit my usual speech and get right to this month's new fanzines. There are a lot of good ones this time, so let's get to it!

In Between the Lines #3

Edited by Sean Pettibone
2406 Red Maple Ct., Troy, MI 48068
Bimonthly, 75¢, 14 pages

This 'zine just keeps getting better. Sean's blend of authoritative video game reviews, news analysis columns, and humor has added a new dimension to the electronic gaming fanzine field.

I don't agree with a lot in Eric Schimek's prescription for improving the industry, and Francis Cone's dissertation on fandom, but I wouldn't have missed reading them. Also notable is Sean's first-hand report on the Summer CES in Chicago. The rest of the zine is good from cover to cover, especially the little touches like the box of strange quotes on the backcover.

In Between the Lines, already one of the best fanzines, is improving every issue. Don't delay sending for a copy.

The Laser #3

Edited by Michael Palisano
2 Rock Ridge Dr. S., Norwalk, CT 06854
Bimonthly, \$1.50 per issue, 14 pages

The Summer CES and Sega's video game rating system are Mike's main topics, though there's also a lot of interesting material about classic systems. In his editorial, Mike makes an articulate plea for tolerance for those who still love the older systems. Elsewhere in the issue is a ColecoVision retrospective that's a concrete example of entertaining material about an older video game system.

The full-page review of **Bart's Nightmare** is a pleasant change from the capsule critiques with which too many fanzines fill their pages. Giving the game

some space lets Mike fully describe the cartridge and analyze all important aspects of the product.

The Laser needs to upgrade its graphics. Its headings are too dark and dense, giving some pages a smudged look. The zine is already legible and well-organized, so there's hope that the visuals will progress right along with the writing.

Mike is intelligent, young and enthusiastic. Not a bad combination, I'd say, for a budding fanzine editor.

Video Views #17

Edited by Ulrich Kempf
4732 Glenwood Circle
Emmaus, PA 18049
Quarterly, \$1.25 per issue, 18 pages

Ulrich made a special effort to line up an all-star selection of contributors, mostly leading fanzine editors. His efforts reward readers with a particularly absorbing issue of what is always a fine publication. From Pat Reynolds' cover to Matt Lotti's column about the Neo•Geo, there's plenty of good reading.

The Dangerous Billy Masters speaks up strongly for fellow fan Chris Johnson. It seems that a humorless prozine threatened to sue Chris over a parody cover, and Billy feels that they ought to pick on someone their own size. I agree completely. In fact, my only disagreement with him is his belief that all prozines are equally stupid about such things. When Lance Rice parodied **EGM**, the publisher called him personally to tell him how funny it was!

Besides columns, the issue has plenty of reviews, a letter column, commentary about fanzines, and the proverbial much, much more.

Video Zone #1

Edited by Chris Kohler
330 Totoket Rd., Northford, VT 06472
Frequent, \$1 per issue, 6 pages

If someone makes a crack about "dumb video gamers," wove this astounding first issue in their face! The 13-year-old editor acknowledges help

from his older brother Dan, but **Video Zone** would be a credit to any first-time faned.

This attractively laid out publication presents reviews, previews, tips and news for all platforms. He covers games for most video game and multimedia platforms. Tops in the issue were reviews of **Final Fury** and **Mario Is Missing**. This is definitely a fanzine to watch. This appealing newcomer is worth a try.

Viewpoint #2

Edited by Alex Frias
265 Cherry St, Suite 6J
New York, NY 10002
Bimonthly, \$1.50 per issue, 26 pages

As it should, the second issue of this video game-oriented fanzine builds on the first with new writers, tighter editing, and more varied content. Alex Frias is an experienced fanzine editor who, if he continues to shed those pseudo-pro trappings, could find himself at the helm of the field's top title.

Certainly, there's a lot to like in this issue, even if I am not quite sure how you "preview" an event that has already happened. Despite this semantic slip, the broad coverage of the Consumer Electronics Show highlights the most interesting games, while also giving news and gossip.

Viewpoint covers topics other than games, but Alex sticks pretty close to the subject. His acidic comments about faned who don't send trade copies, even to zines they review, should be taken to heart by every faned.

Viewpoint is a substantial improvement over Frias' previous fanzine, and there's no sign that he plans to coast.

Fantazine #3

Edited by Pat Reynolds
1740 Millbrook SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49509
Monthly, \$1.50 per issue, 22 pages

The first thing any reader will notice about this engaging fanzine is its excellent two- and three-column layout. Pat is

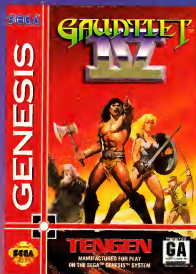
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Grab your Sega 4-Player "TAP." Gauntlet™ IV has arrived...and this time, you'd better bring your friends!

The title that defined video-game adventure is now the first to utilize Sega's new 4-Player "TAP."

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A fire-breathing dragon can really ruin your day. Next time bring back-ups!



Grab four of your buddies and crash a Grunt party. Just watch your back!



GENESIS



FANDOM CENTRAL

a budding artist, and the slick appearance of his fanzine reflects that aesthetic sensibility.

Also, he's probably the best illustrator in fandom at this time, as his cover attests. I'm surprised he doesn't feature more of his artwork on the interior pages.

Besides a large section of cart reviews, **Fantazine** has fanzine reviews, opinion columns, and a major salute to the NES. In particular, Joe Santulli's ruminations on the perfect video game soundtrack struck a responsive chord.

Fantazine would benefit from tighter editing and writing, but most of the pieces are readable and engrossing. The monthly schedule makes Pat Reynolds' latest venture a major title on the fanzine scene.

Game Force #3

Edited by Jeff Beedham
P.O. Box 1610, Belen, NM 87002-1610
Monthly, \$1.50 per issue, 12 pages

A simple, yet arresting cover by Pat Reynolds kicks off this pleasant video gaming zine. Jeff doesn't have the high-powered hardware and software used to produce some of the fancier titles, but he works well with the tools at hand. Certainly, **Game Force** has a well-ordered two-column layout unmarred by excessive typos, which is always a plus when looking through the mags.

One section of the "Press Start" editorial apologizes for a minor reportorial mistake in #2. I applaud such high standards. I'd point out, though, that pieces like this issue's comparison of 3DO with Jaguar are the type that might make me a culprit necessary in the future. Jeff's enthusiasm for new technology is understandable, but gathering a few more facts before writing analysis would make it more valuable to the readers.

Game Force is a likable fanzine with a conscientious editor. Support Jeff's hard work and strong determination with a trial subscription.

Hyperzine #3

Edited by Matt Lotti
3251 Camelot Dr.
Bethlehem, PA 18017-1707
Frequent, \$1.25 per issue, 20 pages

Well-known fan Matt Lotti, who contributes to several other publications on a regular basis, is doing very well with his own title, too. Centered on video games with a smattering of multimedia, **Hyperzine** has good reviews, a long letter column, and a group of provocative columnists.

Matt's editorial is filled with heart-breakingly sincere apologies for lateness. These are totally unnecessary. Fanzines are a hobby. Neither readers nor editors should take announced frequency too seriously.

"Raising Cain," a bits 'n' pieces column by Matt, might have made a more effective editorial than the one he ran. Maybe he had to get in the thick of the zine before he got into the proper writing rhythm. Jess Ragan serves up another installment of his "Detonation" column, and he's as acerbic as ever. A little more positive energy would probably make his critical analysis stand out a little more boldly.

Matt has upgraded every element of his fanzine each issue. That's the kind of track record that gives potential readers confidence when they order a fanzine. And if you want an enjoyable read, order a sample copy.

Matrix #3

Edited by Jeremy Statz
N6148 170 St., Elmwood, WI 54740
Bi-monthly, \$1.25 per issue, 12 pages

Comic books and non-electronic RPGs are now part of the contents mix of this smoothly written and increasingly well-presented fanzine. **Matrix** is part of a new wave of fanzine editors who've discovered that they enjoy exchanging opinions on more than just gaming. By and large, this seems a healthy development, especially if it leads fanwriters to put more about themselves in their zines.

Jeremy's editorial mentions that he plans to avoid covering exactly the same things you'll find in every other fanzine. There's room for more than one opinion on a subject, but Jeremy's intention to go his own way bodes well for the future of this rapidly evolving title.

A good example is the issue's lead review, **Lords of Thunder**. This T.T.I. shooter is an outstanding action contest that hasn't gotten nearly the space it deserves in fanzines or prozines.

As long as zines like **Matrix** continue to develop, fandom need not fear the

fading away of "first wave" titles like **CyberBeat** and **Mindstorm**. It hasn't reached that quality level yet, but the best is definitely still to come for Jeremy and his zine.

Total Supremacy #1

Edited by Jim Pittaro
18 Old Coach Rd., Hudson, NH 03051
Frequent, \$1. per issue, 10 pages

This is a singular event in the short history of electronic gaming fandom. For the first time, two brothers are publishing fanzines at the same time. Jim's older sibling Mike edits **Uproar**, reviewed elsewhere in this column.

The family resemblance is obvious.

Total Supremacy has a selection of video game reviews, plus a rundown of **Alive in the Dark** for MS-DOS.

Despite assistance from Mike, Jim has done most of the work on his own. That's the right way to begin, and I anticipate him writing at greater length in the second and succeeding issues. Let's welcome Jim to the fanzine fraternity with some contributions and maybe a buck for the next issue.

Uproar #4

Edited by Michael Pittaro
18 Old Coach Rd., Hudson, NH 03051
Frequent, \$1.50 per issue, 14 pages

When I last mentioned this fanzine a few months ago, it was a new publication. **Uproar** still experiences growing pains, as its editor progresses through the lessons all faneds must learn, but the improvement over the first issue is quite dramatic.

Like the name implies, **Uproar** is a highly enthusiastic fanzine in which the editor and his staff blast away merrily at all available moving targets. Opinions are the most potent fanzine fuel, but explaining points of view more fully communicates them more effectively. Smaller type, less resort to spelling words in all-caps, and a switch to two-column layout might yield better results.

Mike has some artistic ability, evidenced on this issue's cover. A few small interior illustrations would be a welcome addition.

Mike Pittaro is committed to making **Uproar** a vibrant fanzine forum. A few hurs still bar the way, but I wouldn't bet against this energetic young editor.

Attention Fanzine Editors

If you'd like your fanzine covered in **Fandom Central**, all you have to do is send a copy to:

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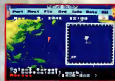
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Clay Fighter Breaks the Mold

An Advance Look at the Sophisticated Fighting Game

by Arnie Katz

Fighting games go in an amusing new direction with **Clay Fighter** (Interplay/SNES). The cartridge, moving rapidly toward late fall release, utilizes Visual Concepts' clay animation techniques to

sive, but **Clay Fighter** is strictly side-perspective combat.

The generic-looking and amorphous characters shown in the early stages of development are gone. In their place is a cast of eight exceptionally detailed and appealingly personalized warriors. (There is a ninth, only available in the "vs" head-to-head mode.)

All fighters share the basic moves. There are three types of punches, the same number of kicks, and the usual assortment of jumps, flips, and crouches. The top L and R buttons as well as the A, B, X, Y bottom buttons all initiate maneuvers, so **Clay Fighter**, like **Street Fighter II**, may play even more smoothly on one of the recently introduced six-button controllers.

Signature moves are important in the game, because each warrior has one or more attacks derived from his or her personality. Helga bops foes with mighty swings of her huge posterior, Bad Mr. Frosty has an icy bear hug, and the Blob can deal a super punch that strikes a half dozen times at once!

Music, speech, and sound effects add a lot to the characterizations. When Bad Mr. Frosty wins a round, he chants, "I'm Bad, I'm Cool, I'm No One's

produce a visually distinctive rendition of the fighting games that have become a craze in the last two years.

The story line in this forthcoming game is a mix of science fiction and surrealism. A giant purple meteor crashes, or perhaps lands, in the middle of an abandoned amusement park.

The debris from the park mixes with the material in the meteor. Almost instantly, Playland becomes Clayland. Eight highly flexible warriors emerge from the wreckage and begin a compulsive quest to become King of the Circus.

They do this by fighting three-round martial arts matches in any of 12 venues around the park. Some of the background animations, especially the "Big Hunk O' Burning Clay" stage, are exten-

Fool!" Blue Suede Goo, a Presley imitator, caps each victory by kneeling and mumbling, "Thank you very much."

The theme has a catchy melody and a well-recorded vocal track. The music during combat isn't quite as ear-catching, but it is still very good.

The "vs." mode provides hot competition. A big reason is the handicap setting, which allows players to adjust each fighter's strength. Giving one warrior power advantage evens up a potentially lopsided contest.



Ouch! The contestants really put their heads together to create great fights!

The version EG previewed, though close to completion in many respects, still lacks a lot of details which will no doubt be incorporated into the final cartridge. Interplay is known for putting a good finish on its titles, and this one won't be an exception.



With a body like this, one can only expect some intensely twisted action!




The Blob takes winning to heart as he transforms himself into a shiny trophy.

Even without those special touches, **Clay Fighter** is a wonderful, entertaining product with broad appeal to gamers of all ages and skill levels. The combinations of smooth game play, a quick learning curve and hilarious animations will provide hours of enjoyment, even for gaming fans who aren't particularly interested in the genre. For older players, this might be the only fighting game you need to add to your collection this year.

"Commit too soon
and you'll wind up
getting burned."

- JOHN MADDEN

(This was probably commentary on a mistake in the secondary, but it
certainly applies to anyone even remotely considering another
football video game. Madden NFL® '94 for Sega™ Genesis™ and Super NES®
hits the stores November 19th, Madden Football Friday. )



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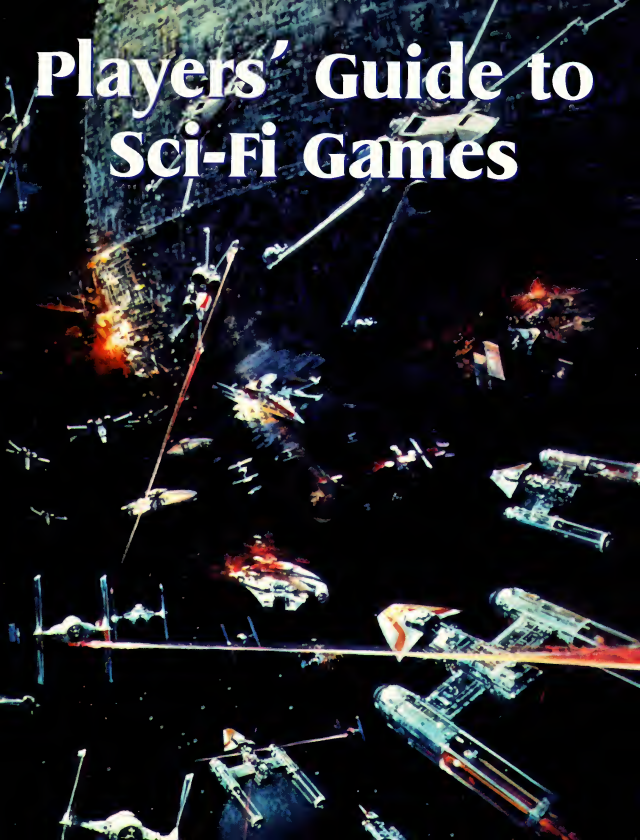
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Players' Guide to Sci-Fi Games



Players' Guide to Sci-Fi Games



by Amie Katz

From **Space Invaders** to **Alien 3**, science fiction has inspired more than 1,000 electronic games. The future is a boundless canvas for the imaginings of designers and developers. Besides, no one can criticize the accuracy of a simulation based on something that hasn't happened yet, and possibly never will.

It may be the stimulus of all the new hardware technology, but there seems to be an upswing in science fiction video games. Here are some of the most intriguing new and announced funware.

Blast Off with

Publishers are launching a record number

Firepower in the Future

Science fiction is often called "the literature of ideas," but strategy often takes a back seat to action in video gaming. Fantasy still holds the edge in popularity over sci-fi in role-playing games and adventures on cartridge, but science fiction leads in action contests.

Star Wars defined science fiction for a generation of American movie-goers. Now LucasArts and JVC Musical Industries are combining on what promises to be a classic game trilogy once it is completed, probably in 1995. Out in time for Christmas 1993 will be **Super Empire Strikes Back** (LucasArts/JVC/SNES), the middle section of the space-age saga. The 12-Mbit cartridge incorporates increased use of mode 7 digitized speech, and complex animation. The use of multiple perspectives makes this one of the most visually impressive video games scheduled for release in the fourth quarter.

Star Wars Rebel Assault (JVC/Sega CD) will invade stores by Christmas. Enhanced with digitized speech and full motion video clips from the *Star Wars*

movies, **Rebel Assault** puts you in the cockpit of three different vehicles: T16 Skyhopper, X-Wing starfighter, and A-Wing starfighter.

Players launch missiles and fire lasers in the 3-D combat sequences in **Star Quest** (Namco/Genesis). Polygon graphics promote high-speed on-screen movement, whether combat is in deep space or on a planetary surface. Aided by his robot companion Freddy, the player battles the menace of Void in a near-future in which the stellar frontier is a battleground for mercenaries.

Blometal (Activision/SNES) is a rip-roaring, old-fashioned, side-scrolling shooter. It's fast, colorful, and exciting. One of the five-level shooter's bragging points is a driving techno-rock music score by 2 Unlimited.

The world's two most famous cyborgs are pitted against each other in the 10-level **RoboCop versus the Terminator**



Blometal's smooth-scrolling graphics and quick game play make it a sure hit.

(Virgin/SNES, Genesis, Game Gear, Game Boy). Due out this winter, it puts the player inside RoboCop's armor in a high-intensity battle against a legion of Terminators. It's based on Frank Miller's four-part Dark Horse series, and a limited edition recap comic will be packed in the box with the cartridge. A version of **RoboCop versus the Terminator** will also be available for the Sega CD.

Another Dark Horse comic book series is the inspiration for **Aliens vs. Predator** (Activision/SNES). A mutual threat in 2333 forces humans and the Predators



Luke must once again battle the Dark Side in **Super Empire Strikes Back**.



Sci-Fi Video Games!

of futuristic carts and CD disks for video game consoles.

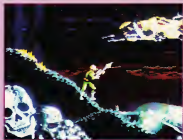


Two of Hollywood's biggest bad guys face off in *Aliens vs. Predator*.

to band together against the Aliens.

Fans of the original *Terminator* movie can look forward to Virgin's multimedia adventure, *Terminator* (Virgin/Sega CD). Cyborg warrior Kyle Reese travels through time to battle Skynet in the future and our present. One of the major innovations in this 10-level shooter is the use of Q-sound technology to give the audio a three-dimensional quality previous games have lacked.

Meanwhile, those partial to *RoboCop* will want to check out *RoboCop 3* (Flying Edge/Genesis). The law enforcement



The Sega CD brings the *Terminator* home with great sound and graphics.

man-machine has a laser pistol, missile launcher, and flamethrower—and the deadliest cast of enemies he's faced so far! Flying droids, ED-209s, and Otomo stand in *RoboCop 3*'s path. A Game Gear edition of *RoboCop 3* will be available by the end of 1993.

Battle machines clash in 28th century conflict in *BattleTech* (Extreme/

Genesis). Due in early 1994, this one- or two-player combat adventure offers 25 missions. With a choice of eight different mechs that walk, run, or fly, one of the most appealing features is that the program can replay climactic engagements. An enhanced version is slated for the Sega CD, also first quarter 1994.

Minds on Tomorrow

Adventures, role-playing games, and strategy-oriented contests give designers a chance to put more sophisticated science fictional concepts into games. Many action carts use sci-fi images symbolically, but brain games can portray characters and the world they inhabit in much more depth.

As the starship *Enterprise* cruises through its last TV season under the leadership of Capt. Picard, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Absolute/NES) turns the series into an eight-bit video game. The player, a newly graduated cadet, guides the *Enterprise* through a series of holodeck training exercises inspired by Jean-Luc Picard himself. A lot of the fun comes from controlling the familiar characters like LaForge, Worf, and Data in this



RoboCop 3, available for the Game Gear, allows for portable sci-fi fun.

hybrid action-adventure.

Dune I (Virgin/Sega CD), originally on PC, is a computer adventure based more on the David Lynch movie than the Frank Herbert novel. As Paul, son of slain Duke Leto, the player strives to defeat the



Harkonnen and gain control of *Dune*. The multimedia edition adds clips from the movie and texture-mapped flying sequences.

One of last year's welcome computer gaming surprises, *Dune II* (Westwood Studios) is coming in a version for the Genesis this winter. As the leaders of one of three noble houses, the player fights for control of Arrakis against Emperor Fredrick VIII. He owes the Space Guild 21 million metric tons of melange, the spice found only on Arrakis, so he will go to any lengths to wrest control from the other factions. The game is faithful to the book and movie, with characters closely resembling those in the story. Real-time combat, enhanced by digitized speech and sound effects, adds a touch of strategy to this already incredible simulation.

Players' Guide to Sci-Fi Games

Walker: A.B.S. Evolution of a Killing Machine



by Scott Wolf

The year is 2420 and the Time Wars have been raging for over three decades. Taking advantage of newly discovered tracts of space time, the Northern Endallions sent a large commando force back in time to establish bases in full knowledge of future enemy maneuvers. It is only when entire units of the Myarn army suddenly blink out of existence that the Myarn high command realizes the immense danger their essentially peaceful nation is in. And so the AG-9 Walker is born—a fearsome weapon which could be taken back in time to challenge the Endallion units established there.

That's the official scenario of Psygnosis' **Walker** for the Amiga, but DMA Designers Ian Dunlop and Neill Glancy are quick to admit that the story is just a cheap excuse to strap on a huge metal stomping machine and cheerfully terminate wave after wave of enemy infantry, aircraft and ground

vehicles—with extreme prejudice.

"**Walker** was inspired by the machines in *Return of the Jedi* (AT-STs)," says Ian, although Robocop's ED-209 seems a likely reference as well. Equipped with twin 30mm cannons which fire high velocity uranium-tipped rounds, the Walker thunders across eight horizontally scrolling levels in four time zones with up to 32 intelligent enemies on screen at any time. The tiny animated infantrymen are reminiscent of Broderbund's classic **Lode Runner**, as they charge the towering Walker and are cut down amid cries of "Yahoo!" and "Die, Scumbag!" from the enthusiastic Walker pilots. "It is," Neill notes, "extremely violent!"

Although PC and MAC gamers may only be familiar with Psygnosis and DMA by way of **Lemmings**, Amiga owners have been blessed with over two dozen Psygnosis titles, including the DMA-designed **Lemmings**, **Menace**, and **Blood Money**. These guys can be relied on to stretch any system's capabilities to its limits and beyond (**Blood Money** on the Atari ST was a prime example). With this in mind, the versions of **Walker** planned for the Sega Genesis, and the much anticipated 3DO systems, might just end up making the superb Amiga **Walker** look like something on a Game Boy.

Tentatively titled A.B.S. (Advanced Battle System), the 3DO version looks to be especially awesome. "We're planning a production level equal to a James Cameron film," says Neill, "Visuals, sonics, cutaway scenes, everything."

Gone will be the horizontal-only scrolling, replaced by a fully CAD-modeled 3-D world, infinitely parallaxed, in which players can move in any direction. "The sets actually exist in 3-D space. As you pass a building, its sides will come into view, you can turn and head down side streets. Everything moves convincingly in 3-D."

The Walker units will be quite different as well. In **Walker** the machine just walked—the ABS is more like a flying tank. The 'head' module has been removed

and arms added, **MechWarrior**-like. "A lot of people thought that the original Walker unit looked like a chicken," Ian explains, "The ABS is a lot meaner." And a lot better armed. Additional weapon systems like chain guns, lasers and missile launchers will be available, enclosed in the body structure for flying and smashing, and deployed for battle.



The enemies in **Walker** are more than tough, and they keep on coming!

Weapon modes will range from manual to fully automatic. The original Walker's digitized radio communication has been upgraded to a pop-up TV monitor for communications with base, wing-men and enemy units.

The time-travel element is also missing. Instead, a more mercenary plot line has the ABS Corporation hiring out Walkers for contract assignments. Payoffs would allow the purchase of better equipment, weapons upgrades, and additional Walkers. Different Walker models will also be featured in various settings.

ABS will also feature a higher frame rate, more levels, a fully animated intro sequence and 32,000 screen colors (up from the Amiga's 90). DMA are shooting for a release to coincide with the European launch of 3DO in April 1994.

ABS for the Sega Genesis is still in its early development stages but it will most likely be a hybrid of both the Amiga and 3DO versions. According to Ian, we can expect more of everything—more firepower, explosions and violence. "It's basically Mass Destruction," he says, smiling.

— Scott Wolf



Real Space Adventures

by Joyce Worley

Thanks to great electronics, armchair travelers have never been able to go so far. A trio of recent true-science programs make science fiction come to life, and let armchair travellers go to space.



Discover Space allows users to easily locate and learn about star formations.

Broderbund's **Discover Space** (MS-DOS) is arguably the most sophisticated astronomy program to date. The user can view the solar system, study star maps, see nebulae, galaxies, comets, and asteroids. The program makes it easy to compare sizes, distances, and see the differences in the orbits of various traveling heavenly bodies.



The user can select any location on earth, to see the stars from that position at any date and time. There are also legends and myths to study about man's dreams of space through the ages, including constellation maps. And for solid accomplishments, there's a history of earth's space programs.

It provides viewing of over 7,000 objects, with a print-out option for maps, graphics and text.

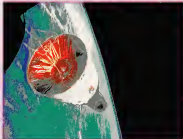
Americans In Space (Multicom/Mac-CD, Windows MPC) uses over 500 photographs plus an hour's worth of full-motion video with narration, to track every American manned space mission. Stunning use of film from NASA and other agencies make this a graphically rich, even exciting, recitation of Man's proudest moments and highest accomplishments.

The program starts at the beginning of our earliest attempts to crack the sky with experimental rockets, provides historical data of every American mission, then adds speculation about future space stations.

Everything is cross-indexed and referenced by project or date, to make it easy to unfold the story. The tale is remarkably complete, even providing information about living conditions in space, and the graphics are simply fantastic.

Space Shuttle (Software Toolworks/Macintosh CD) offers a more personal approach to space conquest to put the stay-at-home into the middle of the action. The user trains with the astronauts, studies every aspect of the gear and control systems, then experiences 53 NASA missions in first-person detail through the artistry of multimedia.

It combines video clips, photography, narration, text, and graphics



Americans In Space gives an in-depth background about the history of NASA.

into a genuine space experience. Orientation includes a history of NASA, then a tour of a shuttle, Mission Control Center, and the special vehicles. The training section puts the armchair astronaut through the official training program, with details on gear, space living and working conditions, and a description of a real mission. The Mission Launch section of the program provides details of



Learn about the entire workings of the shuttle program in **Space Shuttle**.

personnel and various views the blast-offs of each mission.

There's even an embedded game in the program. The **Lift-Off Game** is a simple race to launch before a deadline that also tests the player's knowledge.

This remarkable close-up view of the space shuttle program makes the user almost feel part of the effort. It's probable that none of the people who play these programs will ever actually fly the starry spaceways, nor travel to distant worlds. But, these true-life programs show us a little of what it's like to try.

players' Guide to Sci-Fi Games



by Bill Kunke

For a TV show that never did very well in the ratings and spent its brief existence battling against cancellation, *Star Trek* has survived the test of time with flying colors. While the original show lasted just under three tumultuous seasons, finishing 52nd among all series in its best year (1966-67), the lore and legend of the *Enterprise* and its crew(s) have since become part of the fabric of popular culture.



Have you ever wondered what Kirk's job was like? Here's the chance to find out!

The characters—the imperious Capt. Kirk, the stoic Spock, the all-too-human Dr. McCoy—have all the emotional resonance of Tarzan, Sherlock Holmes, or Superman. Even their catch-phrases (the apocryphal "Beam me up, Scotty!", "I'm a Doctor, not a [fill-in-the-blank]!" and, of course, "He's dead, Jim!") have become a part of the national lexicon. The late Gene Roddenberry's low-budget TV space opera has spawned six motion pictures (and counting), two successful spin-off series (*Star Trek: The Next Generation*

and *Star Trek: Deep Space 9*), and a host of electronic simulations, going all the way back to a strategy-based Sega coin-op that appeared in arcades briefly a decade ago.

However, the home game rights languished for most of the '80s with Simon & Schuster, as a result of that publisher's relationship with Paramount, *Star Trek's* parent studio. Although Simon & Schuster's Electronic Publishing division produced three text-based adventures and one icon-driven contest (*Star Trek: The Rebel Universe*) based on a British program, it basically misused the license, dawdling over the design, execution, and even the documentation of the games until the product was invariably out of date by the time it was released.

At long last, however, the *Star Trek* universe is getting the royal treatment it has long deserved from electronic publishers, with games based on both the original show and *Star Trek: The Next Generation* already available on several platforms.

A Quarter Century in Space

Interplay entered the *Star Trek* picture when it signed an eight-year deal with Paramount Licensing Group, based on the success of *Star Trek: 25th Anniversary*, a program which has already been certified gold by the SPA (100,000 sales). Inspired by its success, Interplay immediately followed up with a CD

You gotta

version of **25th Anniversary**, featuring the actual voices of William Shatner (Kirk), Leonard Nimoy (Spock), and DeForrest Kelly (Dr. "Bones" McCoy).

Following the original crew's dictate to boldly go where no game developer had gone before, Interplay has even pursued a revolutionary joint venture with Sierra Semiconductor Corp. (not connected in any way with Sierra On-Line). This venture will allow users to issue actual voice commands during the playing of **Star Trek: 25th Anniversary**.

The special package contains Sierra Semiconductor's Aria Listener sound card chipset and three episodes from **25th Anniversary**. Each episode contains a mini-mission, complete with puzzle-solving and character interaction,



keep on Trekkin'

with the Aria Listener able to understand user voice commands such as "Ahead Full," "Red Alert," and "Fire phasers!" among others.

Meanwhile, Interplay is back at work on the next entry in the series, **Star Trek: Judgment Rites**. Once again, the designers have strung together a series of episodes which can be played, and enjoyed, as individual games, or merged to form a macro-adventure. In addition to the traditional role-playing elements, **Judgment Rites** adds actual space flight simulation to the program, with players piloting the *Enterprise* and dispatching landing parties to the modular adventure locales.

"We've taken everything we liked from the first *Star Trek* game and made it bigger," was how Interplay Prez Brian Fargo put it. "We're using digitized matte paintings and renderings and have added a lot more audio to take the game to the next level."

The plot revolves around a series of strange occurrences: a circa World War I biplane heading toward the *Enterprise* at Warp 9; life readings on a dead planet; and the sure and certain knowledge that the ship is being observed. But by whom... or what?

While the Interplay *Star Trek* games have, so far, been aimed exclusively at the MS-DOS and MPC audiences, the deal with Paramount includes development on Macintosh and cartridge video game platforms, as well as CD formats.

Star Trek: The Next Generation

The rights to the most successful *Star Trek* spin-off, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, were acquired by Spectrum-HoloByte, and since the deal was struck, the company has been busy as a one-armed paperhanger developing the **ST: TNG** product.

The first release, appropriately titled **Star Trek: The Next Generation**, is available for both MS-DOS and SNES gamers. The user is placed in command of the *Enterprise* and must determine destinations, select away-team members, and join the on-planet adventures, without ever surrendering the all-important



Take orders from Picard himself as you embark on numerous exciting missions.

control of the ship's functions.

Spectrum-HoloByte picked up some expensive talent to help out on this project, including the original spacecraft and set designer for the series, Andrew Probert, and Stephen Goldin, a science fiction author with more than two dozen novels under his belt.

Meanwhile, down the line Spectrum-HoloByte is deep into development on the 3DO version of **ST: TNG**, and has also authored the software which will run the soon-to-open entertainment centers known as StarPosts.

StarPosts are the "next generation" Virtuality centers. Instead of facing off against opponents in the comparatively low-res *Dactyl Nightmare*, gamers will don a lighter weight Virtual Reality Head-Mounted Display and step into a "transporter room" from which they will beam down to assorted on-planet adventures. Cast as characters from the TV show, players will enjoy state-of-the-art VR with graphics boasting three times as many



The familiar faces of the crew show an eagerness to help you succeed.

pixels and a wider screen display than *Dactyl Nightmare*.

The Spectrum-HoloByte software will run on Silicon Graphics' new powerhouse Reality Engine hardware, as opposed to the previous Amiga-based technology. And if the StarPosts pan out, Edison Brothers Mall Entertainment (Virtuality's distributor) plans to open a far more elaborate, 30,000-square-foot center dubbed United Federation of Planets: Star Base late next year.

Star Trek in Your Pocket

As developers and publishers scramble to make up for lost time, all formats are catching up with the *Star Trek* revolution. Even the humble Game Boy has been blessed with a sophisticated piece of software in Absolute Entertainment's **Star Trek: The Next Generation**. This ambitious program casts the gamer as a cadet at Starfleet Academy, with access to over a hundred mission scenarios.



Take the bridge of the new *Enterprise* with you, and help Picard save the day.

For a ship that was originally sent out on a five-year mission, and didn't even get to fulfill that agenda before short-sighted network executives diverted it to drydock, the *Enterprise* has proven to be one durable vessel indeed. Chances are, it will be periodically refitted and assigned a new crew whenever the audience needs to recharge its collective sense of wonder. Considering the vastness of space, it's safe to assume we're going to have more adventures.

Warp factor 2, Mr. Sulu. It's going to be a long voyage.

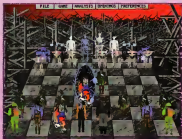
Players' Guide to Sci-Fi Games



by Bill Kunkel

To paraphrase Sigmund Freud, sometimes a game is just a game. Occasionally, however, a single idea spawns an entire genre. Take, for example, Interplay's **Battlechess**. Up until that point, the emphasis in chess programs was based almost exclusively around two components: features and playing power. The most popular chess software of the pre-**Battlechess** era was the **Chessmaster** series. It offered an impressive array of features, from a variety of skill levels to multiple viewpoints of the board, and played a brutal game.

Battlechess reconsidered the problem of a chess playing program, focusing on the issue of the game's audio-visual content. Most observers felt that **Chessmaster** had maxed out those possibilities, and doubted that additional perspectives and/or a variety of chess sets would present a major challenge to the entrenched **Chessmaster** series. Fortunately, Interplay had a better idea: realistically rendered chess pieces and elaborately animated capture scenarios. When a Queen



The Terminator movies give birth to a new chess game with lots of action!

Sci-Fi Chess

wasted a pawn, for example, she really wasted him, incinerating the poor foot soldier with a blast from her icy eyes.

Unlike the original **Battlechess**, however, which used primarily medieval or fantasy themes for its characters and animations, the follow-ups, by both Interplay and other publishers, have been drawn largely to the world of science fiction. Interplay produced **Battlechess 4000**, using clay animation technology to produce its weird alien armies, while Capstone acquired the **Terminator 2: Judgment Day** license as the basis for **Chess Wars**, a game featuring human rebels against an army of exoskeletal Terminators with full-screen, animated capture sequences.

The latest arrival on the scene is **Star Wars Chess** from Software Toolworks, publisher of the original **Chessmaster** series. In an attempt to recapture its position as state-of-the-art chess kings, Toolworks went to the rosetta stone of modern media-based SF as the vehicle to build around its **Chessmaster 3000** engine. "The advantage of the **Star Wars** [property]," observed Software Toolworks' Steve Hutchins, "is not just the cast of characters, but an entire universe that's been built up and defined in tremendous depth."

The project began in early '92, and, despite the fact that Toolworks had a good prior relationship with the Lucas empire as a distributor of some LucasArts' CD products, the negotiations to acquire the characters took a while. In fact, the project was actually shelved in the summer of '92 as a result of internal restructuring within Software Toolworks, despite the fact that both the negotiations with Lucas and the game itself were progressing nicely. Fortunately, it was revived several months later, with the only contractual stumbling block being the use of Han Solo, since it involved the likeness of Harrison Ford. Software Toolworks decided that it had plenty of characters without Solo, however, and simply replaced him with Chewbacca, who apparently had no objection and, as an alien, actually made for a more interesting visual image. (In fact, judging by the brief holo-game sequence in the first film, Chewy is an

enthusiastic, if not skillful gamer.)

Once the project was given the go-ahead, the game design team visited the Lucas Licensing warehouse, where every product using a **Star Wars** likeness is kept on display. Some of these models and action figures later served as models for the on-screen images, after the capture sequences were scripted and storyboarding begun. But for some reason, the artists—who started by producing animated pencil sketches for each character—had problems duplicating C3PO's delicate, almost Chaplinesque walk. "Finally, the head of our art department stood up, stuck her shoulders out and did the walk down the hall, while everyone was rolling on the floor." It must have worked, however, since even the Lucas folks were impressed when C3PO minced out onto the monitor during the demo of characters and rotations.

Star Wars Chess, while initially a floppy disk PC product, will be followed by



Take Luke's light sabre and defend your army as you battle famous foes.

MPC and Sega CD formats, but Hutchins doesn't believe a cartridge version is viable. The CD editions may even feature digitized sound effects from the movies, in addition to the John Williams musical themes used in the original.

Hutchins, who traces the origins of animated chess games to **Battlechess** and the early computer classic **Archon** (which is, incidentally, currently being remade bySSI), believes that this genre has a future. "I think we all enjoy really cool cartoons, and if you simplify this product, that's what it is: a really cool cartoon with a great chess engine behind it."

The World of Xanth

by Marc Camron

For many years, Piers Anthony's Xanth novels have been enjoyed by millions of Science Fiction and Fantasy fans. Now, both readers and computer gamers will have the opportunity to explore this wonderful world on their own in Legend's new game, **Companions of Xanth**.

Legend is a company most widely known for their old-fashioned text style adventure games like **Gateway** and **Erik the Unready**. **Companions** is their first true departure from this format. While they have been sprucing up their interface over the last couple of years, **Companions** offers a true graphic interface. The entire system is mouse driven and the use of "hot-spots" on the screen allows players to easily determine what objects are important to interact with and what items are placed just to spruce up the surroundings.

Still, fans of Legend's text-based adventures need not despair; while the typing may be gone Legend has managed to keep most of the adventuring diversity intact. The action is still first

person, which allows for a more thorough examination of your surroundings.

While it seems that this game may belong better in a Fantasy game section, it holds some aspects of the better science fiction games.

The action starts in the player-characters home. A friend gives you a call to place a little wager. It seems that



Start from home and move into the magical world beyond the screen.

he has this new game, and even though he knows you don't particularly care for this type of game, he is willing to bet that you will find this one a little different. You accept the bet and he sends the game right over.

When you load the game up, a little man appears who already knows your name. He explains how the game works and says that you are about to be transported into the world of Xanth. It is up to you to choose a companion to accompany you on your quest.

Several different companions will join you during your quest and each will be able to present you with advice and assistance.

The quest itself will take players through the magical world of Xanth and allow them to interact with the many people, places, and



Magical characters of all shapes and sizes will appear to help (or hinder) you.

events that have kept readers captivated for 15 years. There is even going to be a paperback copy of **Demons Don't Dream** to further get a feel of Xanth and Anthony's writings. It is also notable to mention that this will be the first paperback edition of **Demons Don't Dream** released, several months before the standard mass-market edition is released.

Companions of Xanth, is nothing less than a historic event for Legend. While their other games have been of unquestionable quality, not even the **Gateway** games by Frederik Phol hold the same kind of mass appeal as a series of Xanth games do. And this, of course, is the reason for the special features like the new interface and the free book. They



Look to your companions to help you out of many dangerous situations.

have done everything they can to keep the overall feel of Piers Anthony's work intact, including the bad puns and strange (but interesting) characters.

Hopefully everything will work in Legend's favor and **Companions of Xanth** will be a huge success. That way, the future of Xanth in computer games will be secured.





MORE ACTION.

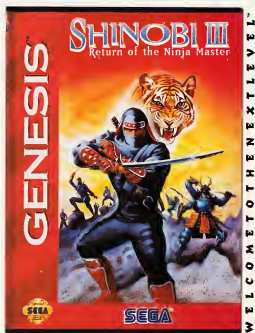


MORE MAGIC.

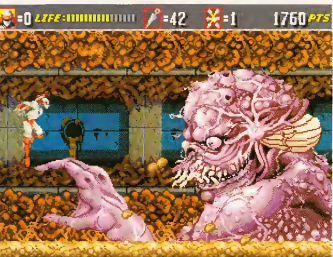


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Electronic Games

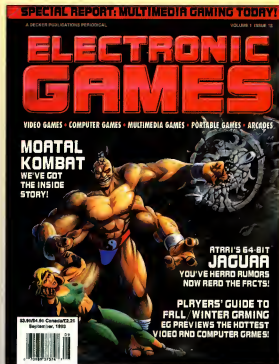
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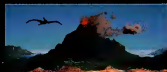
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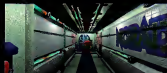
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EG INTERVIEW

DOWN MEAN STREETS WITH DARYL F. GATES

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CONTROVERSIAL MAN BEHIND
POLICE QUEST IV, AND AN EARLY LOOK AT THE GAME.

by Russ Ceccola

Daryl F. Gates spent over 40 years of his life on the LAPD, almost 15 years of which were as Chief of Police. His book, *Chief: My Life In The LAPD*, was a #1 best-seller and is currently available in paperback. "The Chief" now hosts a two-hour radio talk show in LA every weeknight which constantly tops the ratings, and he makes speaking engagements all across the country.

So how did Gates, an admitted computer novice with little experience beyond large communications systems and police force budget programs, become the author of the latest in Sierra On-Line's **Police Quest** series?

The story starts back around the time Gates prepared for retirement from the LAPD. Ken Williams, president of Sierra On-Line, contacted Gates and asked if he might like to participate in the design of the latest **Police Quest**. Gates at first dismissed the possibility because he felt he didn't have the hand-eye coordination for video games, as he thought **Police Quest** games must be. But after looking at **Police Quest 3 (PQ3)** and a few other Sierra products, he realized that "these were not hand-eye coordination games, but a very sophisticated type of product."

Gates had his mind set on realism in the series even then. "There were things in **PQ3** that didn't quite match up with reality. So we pledged that when we did **PQ4** that, inasmuch as you can possibly do it, we would make a realistic game and align it closely with police life."

The Chief decided to tackle the challenge of game authoring, and helped producer/designer Tammy

Dargan decide on a plot from available plot lines already proposed. The final product is a gritty, fast-paced adventure in which the player takes the role of an LAPD

detective as he



murders over the course of a few days.

"PQ4 is a real whodunit," Gates advises. "Everyone comes under suspicion. Detective work most often does not involve the use of your weapon, but instead the use of your brain."

Gates was able to embellish PQ4 with a realism that even other police officers would not have been able to add, specifically because of his familiarity with police life in Los Angeles. He even made use of a location that made him cringe as Chief, a "cop bar" called The Shortstop.

"The Shortstop was a bar I was always bothered by because police officers would go in there and get in some kind of trouble. So the owner couldn't believe it when I sent Tammy there with her crew to film it. That's only one example of the kind of realism that I was able to provide."

Gates provided Dargan with a policeman's manual, as well as the homicide manual, as sources for facts and procedures. He also arranged access to a number of locations, especially the LAPD stationhouse (Parker Center), for filming game scenes.

From the procedures to lifestyles, Gates opened up the library of knowledge that 40+ years on the force had accumulated in his head to the design team. "For example, PQ4 gave me the ability to talk about what really takes place at crime scenes. I love police work and wanted to see what was going on in the field whenever possible."

Although many might find police work dangerous, harrowing and overly frustrating, The Chief looks back fondly on those many years. "It's a fascinating life. Some days can be routine and very boring. On the other hand, there's enough excitement scattered around to last a lifetime. You can't be in that business without having at least one interesting story almost every day of your life," he remarked. In PQ4, players will be able to experience much of the frustration and challenges of detective work.

Besides his computer game input, Gates keeps busy with his radio show and frequent talks. "I enjoy speaking to

various groups. I get out and meet different people and enjoy answering their questions.

"Meeting groups all over the country can be very revealing about our nation," he commented. "One of the things about me I've found is that no one 'sits on the fence.' They're either on one side of the fence and think 'he's great' or on the other side and think 'he's a great ogre.' It's fun in terms of my radio show because we actively search out people who are antagonistic toward me. It's nice to get a chance to spend some time with these people and try to turn them around about me and also influence their opinions of police officers."

Gates readily admits that he has little hands-on experience with PCs, but that is sure to change. "I'm just starting to learn about computers. I've been doing a lot of reading, talking to my radio show's producer, who built his own computer, and also playing some games," he revealed. Actually, The Chief is quite taken with **Aces of the Pacific**.

If he can get a handle on computers through games, that's even better. His wish is that players like PQ4 too: "I hope they're excited about the game itself. I hope they'll also see how difficult a detective's job can be—just working from a crime scene, a body and very little evidence. I'm sure players will be frustrated too as the bodies show up."

Gates has left wide open the prospect of another Sierra project. Some have already reached the proposal stage. "I'd be delighted to do another **Police Quest** game," he said. "There are thousands and thousands of possible stories."

"I'm intrigued by this whole design process. This game has stimulated me to be more creative and I'm sure future games that I could have a part in would be even more realistic and exciting after my initial exposure to game design." The Chief will surely infuse any project with the reality of police life and the respect and love he so obviously has for the occupation.

"I always enjoyed being a police officer, even the toughest parts," Gates concluded.

Police Quest 4: Interview with Tammy Dargan

Police Quest 4 (PQ4) may surprise a lot of Sierra fans, as well as other adventure players, because of the high level of realism in graphics, locations and situations. Designer/producer Tammy Dargan guided all aspects of the project so that it would become "the first truly photo-realistic game." Every location in the game was filmed in and around Fresno, San Francisco, Los Angeles and other California spots.

PQ4's images are striking and cover the gamut of expected places, from a morgue to Parker Center itself, LAPD's headquarters, that Daryl Gates arranged to be filmed. The interiors of the game's Parker Center are those of the real building, as is the Major Crimes/Homicide room.

Dargan called on her experience as a reality show producer to film the game's many locations. Since the process was brand new to Sierra, they had not set aside enough money in the game's budget for costs like location scouts and location fees. Dargan did the groundwork herself and managed to convince many of the game's businesses to allow shooting without a fee. The game's design team acted as crew to further reduce the cost of filming, to their surprise and delight.

PQ4 also has a realistic plot for LA. Of the proposals submitted, Dargan admitted that the "wackiest idea was the one accepted." Gates laughed about the final plot, but quickly explained that "it could only happen in LA." The design team infused the game with as much of a detective's life as they could, and Dargan gratefully accepted Gates' advisement.

— Russ Ceccola



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CK

NATOR™



SPECIAL EG PREVIEW: SUPER STREET FIGHTER II FOUR NEW CHARACTERS - SAME INTENSE ACTION!

While everyone is hot and looking for **Street Fighter 3** to show up, Capcom has pulled a rabbit out of their hat and have come up with another upgrade to the existing **Street Fighter II**. This time though, it is more than just a speed-up with a few new moves. Tentatively titled **Super Street Fighter II**, this upgrade will offer four entirely new characters to

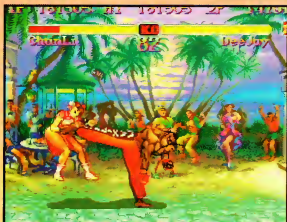
choose from. There are rumors of other changes and graphic enhancements but it remains to be seen exactly what these enhancements might be.

While this may not represent as big of an upgrade as the much awaited sequel does, **Street Fighter II** fans will surely be pleased at the opportunity to learn four new characters. Check 'em out!



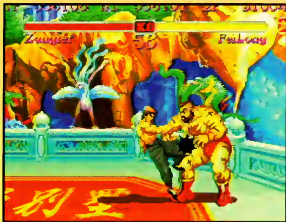
Cammy — England

Cammy is a top British agent with an attitude. Like the song, "when she was good she was very, very good; but when she was bad..." She is out to break up the dreaded Shadolu organization, no matter what it takes. A very accomplished fighter with some ultra-cool moves.



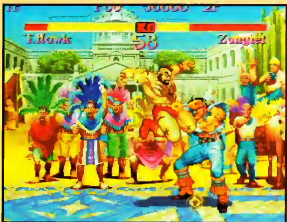
Dee Jay — Jamaica

An aspiring musician who is also a kick-boxer, Dee Jay was in a kick-boxing match when he experienced an amazing rhythm he had never heard or felt before. Now Dee Jay searches the world for this ultimate rhythm he feels will bring him the meaning of his life once and for all.



Fei Long — Hong Kong

Young, explosive, and very enthusiastic, Fei Long is not much more than a boy who has been studying Kung-Fu for most of his short life. While this ability has given him the opportunity to become a movie star, he remains unsatisfied. Now he is out to prove that he is the best there is at the elusive art of Street Fighting.



Thunder Hawk — Mexico

Thunder Hawk is an American Indian who is in search of a Justice which has been denied to his people for many generations. He follows in the ways of the Indian, communing with nature, and making peace with the world around him. Still, he must search for the Shadolu and win back the land which was stolen from his tribe so many years ago.

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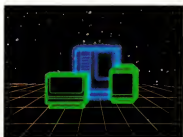
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NEW WORLD COMPUTING



VIDEO GAME GALLERY



The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle and Friends

| | |
|-------------|----------|
| PUBLISHER | Absolute |
| SYSTEM | Genesis |
| THEME | Action |
| MEGABITS | 8 MEG |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| LEVELS | 7 |
| | |
| COMPLEXITY | Average |
| GRAPHICS | 82% |
| SOUND | 80% |
| PLAYABILITY | 78% |

OVERALL 80%

It may not be quite the way you remember our heroes.

Nostalgia is as blind as love, and those who remember the *Rocky & Bullwinkle & Friends* TV series (or have recently discovered it; it's still showing on cable) either think it's the dumbest thing since *My Mother the Car* or truly admire the strangely off-beat humor and imagination of Jay Ward and the crew.

Absolute and producer Dan Kitchen were right on with the introductory material to this game, from the classic theme behind the title screen (complete with power five sounds as Rocky the Flying Squirrel lives up to his name) to the animated sequence telling the background story (unfortunately, with narrative text).

"Our story begins in beautiful downtown Frostbite Falls..." with the opening of the Rocky & Bullwinkle Museum, hous-

ing treasures brought back from their many exploits. Ah, but who should arrive and purloin three of those very treasures? Who else but those Pottsylvania no-goodniks, Boris Badenov and Natasha Fatale. Awww—you knew!

Rocky and Bullwinkle must now go off to the far corners of the world to retrieve the Picayune Pot, the Kenwood Derby and the Ruby Yacht of Omar Khayam. In the course of the game, Bullwinkle Moose has to climb Whynchutaka Peak, plumb the Upsidaisy Mines and explore the interior of Maybe Dick, the mechanical whale. Rocky penetrates Pottsylvania's



waterfront, inner city and even a chamber of horrors. All the while they're up against all kinds of nasties, not just Boris and Natasha, but other minions of the lawless; even Fearless Leader gets into the act.

Neither of our heroes are defenseless, exactly. Perhaps in deference to their image, they don't carry weapons, exactly—but they do throw things. Rocky finds and throws acorns; Bullwinkle finds Mooseberries and...well, the manual says he throws them, but from where I sat it looks like he spits 'em. Rocky can also do the nasties in with a devastating tailspin, which Bullwinkle, being, after all, a moose, can match with a headbutt.

The "Friends" referred to in the title of

the game and of the original show are represented here by Dudley Dooright and that time-traveling team, Mr. Peabody and Sherman. In keeping with the anthology setup of the TV series, they appear in separate "mini games," selectable after the intro. Dudley must of course rescue Nell from Snidely Whiplash.

Snidely, in a locomotive, chases Dudley, riding Horse, along a railroad track. They must jump over broken track sections and crossing gates (unaccountably blocking the track instead of a cross-road!), and duck low-hanging branches and water-tower spouts. If Dudley successfully reaches Nell to rescue her, an extra life is awarded for Rocky and Bullwinkle. The same is true if Sherman can successfully block a dragon's mouth with chewing gum (provided by Mr. Peabody from atop the dragon's head) before being incinerated by dragon fire.

In all the games, damage is visible on the characters as they try to progress, and it is here that it seems like the game departs from the spirit of the show, where, as with most cartoons, characters recover miraculously in the

scene immediately following the one in which something dire occurs to them. So it's depressing to see Bullwinkle, Sherman or Dudley and Horse struggling to continue, no matter how bravely, with smudges and patches and scraggly hair after the very first time they respectively fail to avoid a falling boulder, ball of fire or low-hanging branch.

All the games are thoroughly challenging. It takes many tries to succeed, even in the mini-games, and, be assured, it will be a long time before the player will succeed in getting Bullwinkle to the top of the first mountain, much less both heroes past their many game locales.

— Ross Chamberlain



Plok

| | |
|-------------|-----------|
| PUBLISHER | Tradewest |
| SYSTEM | SNES |
| THEME | Action |
| MEGABITS | 8 MEG |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| LEVELS | 64 |
| | |
| COMPLEXITY | Average |
| GRAPHICS | 81% |
| SOUND | 76% |
| PLAYABILITY | 86% |

OVERALL 81%

Plok flies apart to put a body block on angry Akrillic fleas.

Meet **Plok**, the newest superhero on the SNES scene. King of Akrillic Island, he fires his body parts, yo-yo style, at will and is involved in a two-fold mission: retrieve a large flag bearing his likeness, and rid the world of fleas. Fortunately, the two goals overlap in this outing which takes place in the archipelago of Poly-esta.



Plok must travel over great distances to retrieve his prized possession: the flag.

Plok's initial weapons are his limbs. They detach, hit the enemy, and then bounce back into place. However, these are not his only armament. Plok enjoys dressing up like his five favorite movie characters, and each costume gives him an additional weapon.

The Plocky costume gives the

player-character big boxer boxing gloves and unlimited punching power. Cowboy Plok awards our hero the fastest gun on the island, while Rocket Plok grants him the use of rocket launchers.

In Plok's final battle with the fleas, the player-character has access to the entire contents of Plok's well-armed garage: a unicycle, an off-road truck, a jet pack, a motorbike, a helicopter, a tank, a UFO and a top secret vehicle from the future. However, the gamer may have the opportunity to experience these armed vehicles earlier in the game.

The game is divided into three primary levels: Cotton Island/Legacy; Akrillic Island; and the Fleapit Level. Within these levels are sub-levels containing a variety of goals. To complete each sub-level, Plok must retrieve a flag and run it up one of the nail-like flagpoles.

Cotton Island, to the west of Akrillic, is reached in a non-interactive sequence, while Legacy is a deserted island to the north of Akrillic where the Lost Amulet is rumored to be buried.

After he finds his flag and the amulet, Plok returns home to Akrillic Island. The main island of Poly-esta has many inhabitants and a variety of landscapes, and is, in fact, the land where Plok was recently declared king. Plok discovers on his return, however, that his kingdom has been overrun by fleas. His first task, therefore, is to exterminate the fleas from the island's surface.

The second is to descend into the Fleapit, and terminate the little buggers wherever they can be found. There are a number of hidden bonus screens throughout all of these levels.

Plok has an incredible number of bad-dies for the gamer to contend with. There are five types of fleas to combat: the eggs, each set in a mound of blue grunge; the hatching; adult fleas, who will change from blue to green as they mature; and super fleas, which include flying mutants, spitting fleas, and the tough sentry fleas.

And these runts aren't the only bad guys Plok must contend with. Other bad-dies include sprouts, which come in six varieties, flowers and metal fish. All of the enemies have individual, and



creative, requirements for elimination.

The graphics are something of a mixed bag. The initial scenes are displayed in a two-thirds viewpoint reminiscent of **Toe Jam and Earl**, but the game only uses this mode in non-interactive sequences. The rest of it is in standard side-scroller format. Overall, the graphics are displayed in a cartoon style: brightly colored and rendered in exaggerated perspective. The backgrounds have a strong visual appeal but the character animations are often stiff and unrealistic.

The music theme, unfortunately, cannot be turned off or modified. This does become annoying after extended game play.

Plok begins with two skill settings: normal or child. The normal level has the complete game with the entire end sequence. The child level has slowed down baddies with the difficult levels omitted.

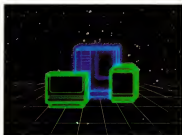
There are a lot of bonus objects available to the p-c, including friendly hornets, surprise gift boxes, magic fruit, golden fruit, force fields, and targets. The targets change the landscape of the game, and can be as small as a moving spike, or as big as a rock wall emerging from the sea.

Regrettably, there are no automatic continues. To earn a continue, the gamer must play four levels from beginning to end without dying. As the player concludes each level, a PLOK token is awarded. When the fourth token is earned, the continue is given.

There are also two key positions designated as "Permanent Continue Positions" which are awarded after the gamer defeats the Bobbin Bros. and Rockyfella bosses.

Plok may not be the next big-name hero, but this is in an enjoyable, if somewhat generic game.

—Laurie Yates



VIDEO GAME GALLERY



The Haunting

| | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| PUBLISHER | Electronic Arts |
| SYSTEM | Genesis |
| THEME | Action |
| MEGABITS | 16 |
| PLAYERS | 1 or 2 |
| LEVELS | 5 |
| | |
| COMPLEXITY | Average |
| GRAPHICS | 85% |
| SOUND | 80% |
| PLAYABILITY | 75% |

OVERALL 78%

Scare those murderers into making a true confession!

Designed by the team who developed the **Paperboy**, **Cyberball** and **Rampart** coin-ops, **Haunting Starring Polterguy** puts the player in control of the star, Polterguy, as he haunts a series of four houses.

Polterguy is the slang-speaking, leather-wearing, mohawk-coiffed ghost of a teenager who met his demise via a substandard skateboard manufactured by sleazy Vic Sardini. Driven by revenge and the chance of regaining his life, Polterguy must haunt the Sardinis' home until he hounds each member of the family out of the house. In addition to Vic there's his wife, Flo and two kids, Tony and Mimi. After terrifying the family out of the first house, P-guy follows the Sardinis to their new home where he begins anew the process of forcing the Sardinis

to vacate the premises. To accomplish this, Polterguy possesses items or "fright'ems" in each house. With over 250 of these items scattered through four houses, players will have a good time chasing the Sardinis with levitating chain-saws, man-eating furniture, suddenly deadly model planes, and a variety of supernatural apparitions.

It's possible to play many times and still discover new fright'ems every game. In addition to the fright'ems, P-guy also has five spells at his disposal to aid him in making the Sardinis' lives a living hell.

After being forced out of the 4th house the Sardinis apparently leave no forwarding address because instead of following them to a new house, Polterguy descends to the underworld where he must battle a fearsome end boss in a bid to win back his life.

Polterguy is powered by ectoplasm which is generated when he frightens the Sardinis. His ecto level is displayed in a bar across the bottom of the screen. When all ectoplasm is used up, Polterguy is transported to a nether region called the Dungeon. Here, ectoplasm is naturally abundant, but Polterguy must avoid



swarms of bats, flying skulls, black holes and giant, disembodied arms that grab at him while he gathers enough ecto to return to the upper world. The Dungeon is the only place where Polterguy takes damage and players should do all they can to keep P-guy's ecto from getting too low. **Haunting** has no save-game or continue option, so once Polterguy runs out of health the game is over and must be started again from the top.

Haunting doesn't live up to the promise of its concept. After the first house is done, the game can almost be played by rote: choose a family member, scare them out of the house, repeat until

house is empty. The Sardinis wander semi-randomly through the houses. They're never all together in a room eating or watching TV. Their schedule never



Hidden levels give the spooky Polterguy additional challenges to overcome.

varies. They can never be found sleeping in their beds in the evening or going to work or school in the morning. The game lacks depth. There's no kind of puzzle solving, no dialogue, no final confrontation with Vic Sardini. The most unpredictable thing the Sardinis ever do is leave a room while Polterguy is trying to scare them. The only wild-card in the family is the dog, whose presence calms the Sardinis and whose barking lowers Polterguy's ecto level and summons ecto beasts, foul creatures who attack Polterguy and consume his precious ectoplasm.

The soundtrack is standard "spooky" music and the sound effects are limited, repeating the same effects for many different fright'ems and actions. The graphics are better and many of the fright'em effects are fun to watch.


The angled overhead perspective often leaves things out of view behind furniture or walls and the control is none too smooth, often over-correcting and leaving Polterguy 45 degrees off from the intended direction.

Overall, most players will have fun discovering and activating the many different fright'ems, but that in itself doesn't constitute a good solid game. **Haunting Starring Polterguy** seems well suited to the less discriminating tastes of the pre-teen audience but adults or anyone who likes a little substance in their games would probably do well to spend their money elsewhere.

— John Hardin

"There's no such
thing as a
one-man team."

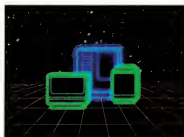
-MICHAEL JORDAN

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VIDEO GAME GALLERY



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Davis Cup Tennis Tour

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| PUBLISHER | Tengen |
| SYSTEM | Genesis |
| THEME | Sports |
| MEGABITS | 8 |
| PLAYERS | 1 or 2 |
| LEVELS | N/A |
| | |
| COMPLEXITY | Average |
| GRAPHICS | 83% |
| SOUND | 77% |
| PLAYABILITY | 88% |

OVERALL 85%

With work, court play goes over the net and around the world.

There's a bunch of tennis games out now, so the selection is worth examining more closely than was needed even a



Diving for a ball will become second nature for those players willing to win.

year ago. **Davis Cup Tennis Tour** provides a variety of play options—singles or doubles, exhibition games, tournament, Davis Cup competition or championship tour—and the opportunity to practice, practice, practice.

The player can use it, because, depending on the buttons pressed and timing, it's possible to hit as many as 12 different kinds of shots, ranging from flat shot to back spin to smash volley. In conjunction with the direction pad, these can be placed with some accuracy.

Key combinations for the shots are selectable, and the six-button controller is supported. Since the combinations are not sequential, except for serves, they can be readily picked up and are almost intuitive. Thus the player can go right into practice with them. Serves are handled essentially the same way as returns, requiring only a preliminary button push to toss the ball into the air.

There are special training modes for serves and, an automatic serve machine placed on the far side of the court helps with volleying, accuracy and speed. These modes include little blue arrows that indicate where to shoot; they're pretty specific, and close doesn't do it. But it shouldn't—we're talking top-end sports, here!

There are beginner and amateur skill level options, as well as professional, which basically change the speed of the action, but that doesn't give the player an excuse to play at less than optimum, does it?

These skill levels are available in all competition modes. Other than that, and the different competition modes themselves, there's nothing that can be described as game levels, requiring passage through one to reach another. Other than the training and exhibition games, of course, there is a playoff sequence, with an elimination chart that is updated at the end of each match. In Davis Cup competition mode, the next match-up is shown then.

In championship play, which represents the globe-traveling life of a tennis pro, financial constraints also affect the options. There are password options to return to competitions in progress.

There is a wide selection of tennis player personae, at different rankings and presumed nationalities. The game selects any of these as surrogates on the screen as well as for opponents in exhibition games. Some such selection is possible in tournament play as well.

Singles play can be either against the Genesis or another human player. Whenever two human gamers are matched,

both views are provided via horizontal split screen.

Doubles play includes the options of two players versus the computer or humans across the net from each other with electronic partners. The single player of course gets to face two robot players with a robot partner. In Davis Cup competition, singles and doubles matches alternate.

Four court surfaces are provided: hard, clay, grass and indoor. These affect ball behavior and how the player moves—and the sound effects, which includes an excruciating tennis-shoe squeak on the indoor courts.

The graphics and animation are adequate within the framework of game play. Except when about to serve, the characters seldom stand still, flexing and shifting from foot to foot as they await the ball. The court is viewed in perspective, and the angle changes with location of the player. There are some nice touches such as apparent scuff marks on the oth-



There are many options available to test the player's reflexes and stamina.

erwise plain court surfaces. The back wall of the court is grey, emblazoned with "Tengen" and "Davis Cup." (Tengen, by the way, always sponsors the pro players on the championship tours.)

The crowd in the bleachers could be painted there save when a point is made, and then it...jiggles. There is a scoreboard above the crowd. Both crowd and board disappear when the two-player split screen is on; the split screen images are not squeezed.

A fairly bouncy musical soundtrack provides the background. There are no crowd sounds; other than a suave British announcer giving the score and the tennis shoe squeak, the only sound effects are the whack of the serve and the bouncing of the ball.

Davis Cup Tennis Tour is serious tennis on TV, be prepared for a challenge.

— Ross Chamberlain

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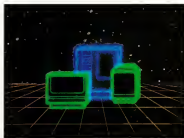
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VIDEO GAME GALLERY



Bart's Nightmare

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| PUBLISHER | Flying Edge |
| SYSTEM | Genesis |
| THEME | Action |
| MEGABITS | 8 Meg |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| LEVELS | 5 |
| | |
| COMPLEXITY | Average |
| GRAPHICS | 92% |
| SOUND | 87% |
| PLAYABILITY | 88% |

OVERALL 89%

A bizarre journey through the baffling brain of Bart!

It's every kid's nightmare: you've just spent hours working on a homework assignment which then blows out the window. As you run through the streets in pursuit of the wayward sheets of paper, gusts of wind blow them away just as your hand reaches out for them...

This is the premise of a superb new Genesis game, **Simpsons II: Bart's Nightmare**, which has already appeared in SNES format. Both editions were developed by Sculptured Software, and players familiar with the SNES version will find little has changed in its transition to the Genesis.

As the introductory scene begins, we see an unaccustomed sight: Bart working away on his homework. Through the miracle of time-lapse animation, hours pass and day becomes night. An exhausted

Bart drifts off to sleep—and, perchance, to have a nightmare! Actually, five nightmares, all based on characters and situations remarkably faithful to the popular TV series.

Bart's dreamscape encompasses six different worlds. The first is Windy World, an angled, side-scrolling dream vision of Bart's home town. As he chases the windblown sheets of paper, however, it soon becomes obvious that this is not the Springfield that Bart knows during his waking hours: mailboxes attack him; tiny Lisa fairies flit up and down the street, transforming Bart into a toad at every opportunity (and a kiss from a wrinkled old lady is the only cure!); and Blinky, the three-eyed, mutant fish is swimming down the middle of the street. These various characters are all engaged in the process of stealing Bart's "Z's," and when they're all gone, if Bart has collected his lost assignment, he's looking at yet another "F." Bart's weapons in this world gone wrong are not exactly awe-inspiring, but they are effective: he can spit watermelon seeds, blow gum bubbles, and produce a "smart belch" after downing a can of soda pop.

Bart can escape from Windy World—and collect the missing homework—by jumping on the stray sheets of paper. This immediately transports him to one of five game worlds, where he must conquer the obstacles and win the mini-game in order to regain the missing homework.

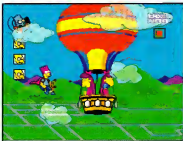


Young Bart's Imagination certainly takes over when he's sleeping!

The Bartzilla scenario is the most entertaining of the quintet, with Bart transformed into a gigantic, city-stomping prehistoric monster with fireball breath, laser beam eyes, and curiously spiked hair. Bartzilla must not only trample on buildings and lay waste to historic monuments, he must also deal with the pesky resources of the armed forces and their tanks, choppers, and fighter jets.

The Temple of Maggie is a witty

Indiana Jones parody with Bart leaping from stone to stone while giant papayas track him like hunter-missiles. In Itchy & Scratchy's world, Bart, armed with a giant mallet, must take on both members of this psychotic cat and mouse



The boss levels of the game feature familiar characters from the show.

team. As always, the violence escalates quickly and a mallet soon looks pretty lame alongside the demented duo's bazookas and flame throwers. In the Bartman scenario, we get to control our favorite boy wonder as he battles unnatural elements and such terrifying Bosses as Barney and Smithers.

The weakest of the mini-games is Bart's Bloodstream, in which Bart floats through his own surreal bodily fluids, battling viruses, which he must inflate with a pump until they burst. The game gets its point across; it's sufficiently gross to amuse any adolescent, but the game mechanic simply isn't satisfying over the long haul.

The graphics in all the scenarios are simply superb, deftly capturing each gesture and movement of these characters with whom we've become so familiar in recent years. The game is both visually and literally faithful to its source material and the only weakness lies in some of the mini-games themselves. In the Itchy & Scratchy world, for example, the violence goes from hand weapons to bazookas in the blink of an eye. The player has barely gotten into the learning curve before being fed to the wolves.

Overall, however, this is perhaps the best of the Simpsons video games, and certainly far superior to the Konami coin-op which simply uses the characters as generic props in a generic arcade game. Here, everyone stays in character, and most of the games are actually quite a bit of fun to play—especially Bartzilla and Bartman.

In fact, I think Bart would love it.

—Will Richardson



Out to Lunch

| | |
|-------------|-----------|
| PUBLISHER | Mindscape |
| SYSTEM | SNES |
| THEME | Action |
| MEGABITS | 8 |
| PLAYERS | 1-2 |
| LEVELS | 48 |
| | |
| COMPLEXITY | Hard |
| GRAPHICS | 90% |
| SOUND | 93% |
| PLAYABILITY | 81% |

OVERALL 87%

See the world on only 100,000 calories a day!

The age-old cafeteria cry of "Food Fight!" gets an interesting new spin in Mindscape's SNES arcade contest, **Out to Lunch**. Pierre Le Chef, an eccentric, world-renowned gourmet, normally tours the world preparing gastronomical delights for the rich and famous. Alas, a culinary catastrophe was created when Pierre's ingredients escaped from his kitchen. And now that these renegades have tasted freedom, they are determined to avoid recapture, threatening Le Chef's reputation in the process.

Pierre faces several problems in addition to retrieving his free-roaming food-stuffs: first, he must either avoid or destroy the bacteria and insects trying to

infect the foods; second, his jealous arch-rival, the lesser-known Le Chef Noir, counters Pierre's successful captures by re-releasing the footloose food items.

Out to Lunch sends the player-character chasing through six countries: Switzerland, Greece, the West Indies, Mexico, China, and France. Each nation provides a variety of visual backgrounds and geographically-based pitfalls. For example, Switzerland's snow makes the slippery platforms especially treacherous.

Once the number of players and difficulty levels are set, the game kicks off with a screen display that includes the name of the country being visited, its flag, and its special guest food.

The p.c. must avoid touching any moving object. In most cases, Pierre will just be stunned, but he can lose a life if he stumbles into something dangerous.

Pierre begins each scenario by locating his net, with which he'll be able to capture the escaped edibles. He can carry as many as he likes before emptying them into a holding cage, but Pierre loses everything if he is stunned.

Once the food is deposited into the cage, it may not necessarily remain there. Le Chef Noir can open the door and free the captive food, which will then be teleported to a different area of the multi-screen playfield.

There are bonus fruit rounds at the end of each country. All the extra time Pierre has accumulated at the conclusion of each level is tallied to determine the amount of time the p.c. has to gather fruit off shelves. After pulling the lever on the fruit machine, Pierre must jockey a shopping cart to keep pace with the scrolling screen. If the cart falls behind, the bonus round ends.

The graphics offer sharply defined images and vivid colors, with creative animations provided for the different foods. For instance, if Pierre stuns the pineapple once too often, it breaks up into slices before vanishing from the screen. The egg, when stunned, produces tiny cracks in its shell. The



infected foods, and the other menaces Pierre encounters, look appropriately malignant before they're destroyed and reduced to slime. Truly, the sight of bacteria hurling all over Pierre is not for the faint-hearted.

Visual clues are also important in saving time. In Switzerland, when Pierre is climbing the upper ledges, if the ledge directly above him has a base of dirt, instead of rock, he can simply jump up onto it rather than taking the normal, more circuitous route.

The music is excellent. The initial tempo helps set the pace for Pierre, and the tunes provide forewarning by issuing an ominous melody when Noir is loose, or a quicker tempo when time's short.

Out to Lunch's weaknesses, however, are in the area of playability. First, there are no passwords or even continues. Once Pierre dies, the player must scroll past the opening credits, the menu, the country opening, and the escape scene to resume game play. A shortcut appears only if the gamer chooses the advanced option because then the gamer skips directly to the West Indies. Second, finding the bonus weapons is not helpful. There is no way of knowing what they are or what they are supposed to do, without undergoing trial-by-failure.

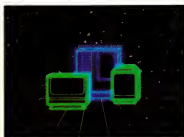
While the animations and music are fine, the game is not as much fun as it could be. On each level, the gamer needs to first locate the device, which entails searching the entire playfield. The added mechanic of sweeping food into the net is simply not fun, and this complication detracts from the game's fun quotient.

Out to Lunch should appeal to platform gamers hungry for new twitch-type challenges, but it may leave others feeling slightly underfed.

—Laurie Yates



On your journey for ingredients, you will visit many exotic, faraway countries.



VIDEO GAME GALLERY



General Chaos

| | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| PUBLISHER | Electronic Arts |
| SYSTEM | Genesis |
| THEME | Action/Strategy |
| MEGABITS | 8 |
| PLAYERS | 1 to 4 |
| LEVELS | N/A |
| COMPLEXITY | Hard |
| GRAPHICS | 81% |
| SOUND | 78% |
| PLAYABILITY | 83% |

OVERALL 80%

Pitting battle squads against each other can be fun.

General Chaos, a humorous, strategic war simulation, is deliberately different from the standard side-scrolling, one man shoot-'em-up war games prevalent nowadays, which may or may not be a good thing.

In the 1980s, most electronic war games were defined by such titles as **Front Line**, **Commando**, and **After Burner**. More recently, there have been many ground troop action cartridges to go along with other strategic video and computer games depicting naval or aerial combat. What most of these have in common is that the opposing army, navy or air squadron must be annihilated by a single person, aircraft or sea vessel.

The player assumes the role of General Chaos fighting against his arch nemesis, General Havoc (two-, three-, and four-

player games are also available with the options of competitive or cooperative play). Both generals have tried to vanquish the other, but their efforts until now have been futile.

Game play consists of the choice and manipulation of an individual squad for each of the battles. Squads have a variety of different kinds of soldiers, each of whom specializes in a specific weapon from a selection including machine guns, flame throwers, dynamite, hand grenades, and bazookas.

Once a squad is chosen, the player must position the troopers to use their weapons in an effective way. For example, a grenade thrower will not be as effective in close combat as a machine gunner, and a flame thrower is utterly useless while the user is crossing a body of water.

If any two opposing soldiers get too close, hand-to-hand combat results. All action elsewhere on the screen stops while the two adversaries slug it out until there is a winner.

Since there are so many troopers, instead of controlling their actions directly, a cursor is used. With a point-and-click type interface, it is possible to



maneuver the soldiers anywhere on the battleground via the cursor position.

There is one type of soldier, the commando, that has no cursor and is controlled directly by the movements of the control pad. The only disadvantage to using commandos is that there are just two individuals per squad as opposed to five troopers on regular squads.

If a soldier is wounded in battle, medics appear on screen to come to his aid (if the player has medics on hand and presses the correct button in time.) At the beginning of the game there are five medics; an additional medic is

gained at 10,000, 25,000 and 50,000 points.

The main objective is, of course, to eliminate all enemies, but occasionally



Plan battle strategy and tactics in some of the most famous countries on Earth.

"bonus" objectives are also given. Some examples of these are to take out the enemy's water supply, destroy vehicles, or collect plunder.

Graphics of the soldiers' and Generals' close ups are extremely well done, and actual battle graphics are nicely drawn, too. Aside from the abundant but not too graphic violence, there are humorous animations like troopers slipping in mud and losers of close combat matches resorting to cheap measures like pulling out a gun and shooting the winner. Sounds, like all the usual gunshots and explosions, are nothing extraordinary.

The unorthodox control system for this game will probably frustrate many players used to the **Contra** and **Rolling Thunder** action genre. Obviously the game gets progressively harder, but an adjustable difficulty level would be much appreciated. The game is just too easy in the early stages and too difficult afterward. A password or battery backup would have eliminated the nuisance of having to start over from the beginning after every game lost. Still, no one can say it isn't a challenge.

Despite these negative aspects, **General Chaos** is fun and entertaining. Perhaps Electronic Arts will correct any flaws and make new editions in a future sequel. Until then, **General Chaos** is good, but could have been much better.

— Tony Bueno

ИЛИ ЧУЖАЯ ДОМОВИНА ИЛИ РУБЕЖ ВОЗДУШНОСТИ?



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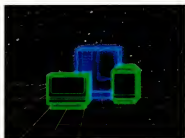
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VIDEO GAME GALLERY



MIG-29

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| PUBLISHER | Tengen |
| SYSTEM | Genesis |
| THEME | Flight Simulation |
| MEGABITS | 8 MEG |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| LEVELS | 6 |
| | |
| COMPLEXITY | Hard |
| GRAPHICS | 89% |
| SOUND | 74% |
| PLAYABILITY | 70% |

OVERALL 77%

Stalk the skies from the Russian point-of-view.

Despite their enduring popularity among computer gamers, flight simulators have never caught on in the video game marketplace. There are several reasons for this. For one thing, any simulator worth its wingnuts requires more command inputs than a video game controller can easily provide. For another, the polygon technology that drives flight simulation is tough to reproduce on today's video game systems.

MIG-29 overcomes the visual problems which plagued some of the earlier Genesis flight sims; it generates a convincing illusion of speed and both the air and ground objects, while scarce, are nicely delineated.

The problem lies in that old input bug-aboo. Because of the many commands which are required to run this program,

extensive use is made of menus. Weapons are controlled via the menu, as are wheel and air brakes, map access, chaff, and any number of specialized, situation-specific commands. This is no big deal if a six-button Genesis controller is used, but on the standard, three-button version, there's far too much duplication of command functions.

For example, the "A" button not only fires weapons, it's also the thrust controller. Let's say the player has just slapped on the air brakes in order to slow down while approaching a target. In order to re-accelerate, the "A" button must be held down while pressing the control pad up. Unfortunately, this combination command is as likely to discharge a missile or point the MIG's nose down, as it is to produce acceleration.

Conceptually, **MIG-29** is a weird game. A simulation of a Russian combat jet would make an interesting subject on computer, where there are already dozens of games which recreate every type of U.S. fighter aircraft. But why go for a novelty aircraft simulator when video games have yet to do justice to the most well-known American aircraft? In fact, until Microprose releases **F-15 II** (probably later this month), the only other flight sims available on the Genesis are Tengen's own mediocre **Steel Talons**, and Electronic Arts' feeble video game conversion of **LHX Attack Chopper**.

MIG-29 employs a familiar, albeit disguised, scenario with a Glasnost spin: the mythical oil-rich principality of Sautar is attacked by its equally non-existent Middle Eastern neighbor, Arzaria, under the command of General Hasouz. The Western nations are nervous because Hasouz now controls a quarter of the



world's oil production, as well as a springboard to attack the neighboring nation of Yabal. What's the matter, did Tengen think it had to get licenses from Kuwait, Iraq, and Israel? Or were they afraid that Hussein would sue?

In any case, this scenario ultimately has Russians flying with NATO troops (which explains how the player's MIG got there) in order to save poor Sautar and Yabal. The idea of Russians sending air support to save Israel is certainly interesting, if unlikely.

Players get to fly a training mission and five regular missions, in sequence, all run with limited fuel. The MIG can land for refueling or even try gassing up while in the air, with the help of a VC-10 Tanker. Video game pilots, meanwhile, get to fire on ground troops, blow up ships at sea, and even tackle SCUD missiles.

MIG-29 offers most of the frills available on computer combat flight sims, including multiple viewpoints (accessed by menu), weapon selection (a cannon and five missile types), and computer targeting (the sighting box turns red when the object is locked on).

The graphics are fairly impressive, certainly the best we've seen so far on a Genesis flying game. There's even a bit of FMV; after each crash, the game toggles to a screen showing five tinted (originally black & white) photographs of MIGs in flight. The photo which comes closest to representing the type of crash the player's aircraft just experienced then animates, showing digitized footage of the explosive landing.

MIG-29 is not without its problems, obviously, but in a weak field, it is the best of the available flight sims on the Genesis. It recreates, as well as possible, how this plane flies and fights.

(You might also want to add five to ten points to the Playability rating if the gamer is using a six-button controller.)

— Bill Kunkel



Lock-on! The MIG-29 is probably the only rival to the USA's F-14 and F-15.



Genghis Khan II

| | |
|-----------|-------------------|
| PUBLISHER | Koei |
| SYSTEM | SNES |
| THEME | Military Strategy |
| MEGABITS | 8 MEG |
| PLAYERS | 1-2 |
| LEVELS | 4 |

| | |
|-------------|------|
| COMPLEXITY | Hard |
| GRAPHICS | 85% |
| SOUND | 74% |
| PLAYABILITY | 88% |

OVERALL 83%

Ancient warfare is a rare treat for brain-gamers.

The turbulent 13th century is the setting for one of the most challenging and detailed military simulations ever wedged into a cartridge. Koei has prospered with its maverick policy of producing heavy-duty mind-stretchers for



Plunder the realms of the ancient world as you strive to increase your empire.

the video game market. This, like the same company's **PTO**, pushes the generally accepted limits of what typical players want.

Genghis Khan II offers four scenarios. The object of the first is to unify all of Mongolia. The others depict attempts to conquer the world. Winning the initial scenario automatically produces a chance to embark on the campaign to dominate Eurasia. The other two



represent shorter campaigns.

After selecting solitaire, two-player, or computer demo mode, the gamer employs the Options Menu to customize game-flow. The most important choices involve whether to watch battles and individual combats not under direct control.

Each participant chooses a home base and a Ruler. Conquered nations become Vassal States, under the Ruler's control through appointed Governors.

The Ruler has up to eight Generals to lead armies and serve as diplomatic couriers. Domestic policy is the province of Advisors, recruited from among Generals in the home country or vassal states.

The Ruler's family is as important in the game as any General. If the Empress and Ruler get along, they will have Princes and Princesses. A Prince who reaches the age of 10 is eligible to become the Successor should the original Ruler die, and a Princess given in marriage can cement the loyalty of a potentially rebellious Governor.

Each year is divided into four seasonal game-turns. The number of orders a Ruler can issue is determined by Body Points, shown on the main display in the upper left corner next to a picture of the Ruler. Alternatively, the Ruler may delegate this responsibility to an Advisor in the home country, individually approving or rejecting each edict as it is made.

The Right or Left button toggles between two data blocks that give an

amazing amount of data for each Home base and Vassal State. These include everything from gold reserves to land yield. Another box has character information. It shows political ability, war ability, leadership, charm, body points, age, rank, and relationship to the Ruler.

There are 16 units in the game. Vital statistics for each one, which the user views by picking the appropriate option on the main display, provide several

measures of combat strength, plus spirit, mobility, and defensive strength.

Battles are the main activity in the game despite the intricate domestic simulation. The Ruler organizes his troops for the campaign, either naming a commanding General or taking the baton himself. After both sides position their Legions, the Battle Menu appears. This lets the commander reorganize the Army, negotiate peace, or issue orders to each Legion.

The Combat Display fills the screen when rival units are adjacent. The player gives move and fight orders. Each combat has a limited number of turns, usually 109, in which to achieve victory. This consists of forcing the enemy to withdraw or submit, or eliminating the units altogether.

Genghis Khan II is involving and stimulating, but don't expect real-time firefights. Those who enjoy a rigorous strategic test, however, will definitely enjoy this one. The special blend of history and gaming makes for a good time.

— Arnie Katz





VIDEO GAME GALLERY



Redline: F-1 Racer

| | |
|-------------|----------|
| PUBLISHER | Absolute |
| SYSTEM | SNES |
| THEME | Racing |
| MEGABITS | N/A |
| PLAYERS | 2 |
| LEVELS | N/A |
| COMPLEXITY | Average |
| GRAPHICS | 83% |
| SOUND | 75% |
| PLAYABILITY | 90% |

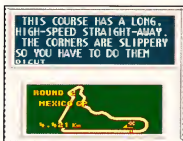
OVERALL 83%

Put the pedal to the metal in this deep Formula One sim.

If a racing game doesn't offer something special these days, it is likely to get left at the starting post. **Redline** doesn't lead the way in audiovisual impact, but it is a sophisticated and



Quickness and agility are the keys when trying to save time in the pits.



There are many courses to choose from, each with its own dangers and thrills.

highly detailed simulation of the Formula One grand prix circuit.

Flexibility is one of this cartridge's major strengths. One or two drivers can practice, try any course, or embark on an arduous tour of the world's most challenging tracks. Players determine the number of laps in head-to-head races, and may choose sound in stereo or mono modes.

There's even a choice of controller configurations! This makes learning to steer, accelerate, and brake a snap.

The gamer gets to race under any desired name, pick the car's color scheme, and most importantly, customize the machine to optimize performance under the day's racing conditions.

Free Practice provides an opportunity to sample all the nuances. One can zoom around any of the 16 tracks and, through trial and error, learn the effects of customizing adjustments in 11 separate areas. These include: front and rear wings, front and rear suspension, brakes, steering, tires, engine, transmission, and chassis.

The driver also decides how much special gas to carry for quick starts and come-from-behind finishes.

Redline recognizes that everyone doesn't want to delve into auto racing to the same degree. The game-program has default selections for everything. If all you want to do is turn on the SNES and start racing, you can do it.

In the solitary mode, the main display fills about two-thirds of the screen. Below to the left is an overhead course schematic that pinpoints the positions of the cars. Below to the right is a digital

speedometer, a representation of engine rev, a shift indicator, and a read-out for the amount of special gas remaining. A tire grip indicator is in the upper left corner.

A three-line information block, located in the upper right corner of the screen, summarizes the car's performance. It tells total elapsed time, time on the last lap, and the racer's fastest lap so far in the race.

The two-player mode divides the screen horizontally. The designers had to juggle the data to make it fit into this format, but all the information is still readily available.

The graphics are decent, but not spectacular. Don't expect any fiery explosions or gory accidents.

The modified first-person view, from just behind the car, is tried and true. Since the player's vantage point is very close to the road surface, it can be hard to see what twists and turns are coming next without a quick glance at the course



map. To compensate for the limited visibility, the game provides pop-up icons that indicate upcoming turns.

Sound effects are unremarkable. The music is perfunctory. The most noticeable sound in the whole game is the whine of powerful engines.

It is likely that Absolute Entertainment sacrificed a little in both audio and video in order to give such a rich game-world.

Redline: F-1 Racer isn't for everyone. It doesn't have riveting play-action, and the graphics are purposely low-key.

That doesn't mean that **Redline** is your mom's old station wagon, either. This action-strategy contest successfully communicates the factors that go into becoming a big-winning Formula One race car driver, only you don't have to deal with the possible injuries!

— Arnie Katz

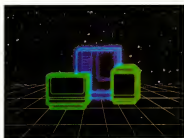
THE NIGHT MAN

Justice isn't
ALWAYS blind...

ULTRAVERSE

Steve Englehart
Darick Robertson
Andrew Pepoy

October '93



VIDEO GAME GALLERY



Super Off Road: The Baja

| | |
|-------------|-----------|
| PUBLISHER | Tradewest |
| SYSTEM | SNES |
| THEME | Racing |
| MEGABITS | 8 |
| PLAYERS | 1-2 |
| LEVELS | 8 |
| | |
| COMPLEXITY | Average |
| GRAPHICS | 83% |
| SOUND | 88% |
| PLAYABILITY | 92% |

OVERALL 87%

You'll never get that bouncing baby buggy through the Baja!

The Baja.

Throughout this hemisphere, it is synonymous with bad road; the toughest driving territory ever to total a tire.

As a result of this reputation, this otherwise unattractive piece of real estate has become the Mt. Everest of off-road racing. According to the excellent documentation that accompanies **Super Off Road: The Baja**, Bud Elkins ran the first documented sprint of the peninsula on a motorcycle, in 1962, in just under 40 hours. Ever since, a certain breed of people have been facing the challenge that Ivan "Iron Man" Stewart tells us is "not really a race, and this may sound corny, but it's an adventure."

The Baja 1000 has, in the interim, become totally organized—complete with t-shirts and video game licenses—and

recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. But as this simulation shows, the actual driving is as wild and wooly as ever, even with state-of-the-art automobile technology under you.

Before the game begins, gamers can access a setup screen (to determine difficulty level, car color, number of players, etc.), take a pre-run, enter a password (to pick up a race in progress), or begin one of the three races.

The complete Baja 1000 comprises eight legs, from Ensenada to La Paz, the traditional finishing point of the run. The player can opt to drive the first two legs (the Mexico 250), the first four (the Ensenada 500) or go the whole enchilada and race the entire Baja 1000.

Once a run has been selected, a screen appears showing a map of the Baja Peninsula, the name of the next leg, and a tip from Ivan Stewart, the game's godfather.

The racing itself employs a behind-the-car, **Pole Position**-type perspective, with the primary difference between this and



speedometer; position in the race; and number of nitro blasts on board. There are also a series of warning lights which indicate specific damage to tires, shocks, brakes, lights and engine. The nitro canisters (which are found randomly placed along the course or can be purchased between legs) give the Special Unlimited Toyota Desert Race Vehicle a short, but intense burst of speed.

Between legs, the player gets to make Pit Stops, where prize money can be used to restock and repair the vehicle. Nitros can be purchased, and brakes, tires, etc. can be repaired, but it costs plenty to do so.

In addition to nitro canisters, the player can also acquire extra money by driving over the money bags scattered across the Baja's bleak landscape. However, there are also strict financial penalties for hitting the spectators, animals, and motorcycle-like Quad riders.

The ride itself is pretty exciting and a great deal of fun to play. There are obstacles everywhere, and just keeping up with the other racers is hard enough, let alone avoiding the innocent and picking up bonus items! The new point of view works much better for this type of race than the previous **Super Off Road** perspective. The game really communicates the brutal difficulties involved in conquering the Baja with even the most technically evolved vehicles.

The into-the-horizon graphics and realistic sound effects do clash somewhat with the simulation's more arcade-like elements—such as the money and nitro power-ups which are distributed over the hellish topography—but any suspension of disbelief difficulties are more than compensated for by the fun these elements add to the game.

— Bill Kunkel



Wanton destruction of your friendly competitors will reduce your funds.

previous racing games being the lack of a clearly defined track. This is *offroad* racing, after all, and it's often a good idea to stay out of the lead, leaving at least one car to follow until the gamer's own vehicle begins to near the finish line.

Information is communicated via a large data display at the bottom of the screen. This "dashboard" features bar gauges showing distance traveled/remaining, and damage; a digital clock;

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STEVE GERBER
AARON LOPRESTI • GARY MARTIN

October 93



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SOFTWARE GALLERY

SYNDICATE

Syndicate

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| PUBLISHER | EA/Bullfrog |
| DESIGNER | Peter Molyneux |
| PLATFORM | MS-DOS |
| THEME | Strategy |
| MEMORY | 12 MB |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| | |
| COMPLEXITY | Average |
| GRAPHICS | 95% |
| SOUND | 90% |
| PLAYABILITY | 90% |

OVERALL 94%

It's a cyberpunk world of conquest in hyper-realistic mode.

Bullfrog, a British development house, rose to prominence with the hit game **Populous**, a unique strategy game that captivates players everywhere with its simplicity and high degree of realism. Bullfrog followed **Populous** with **Powermonger**, another hit strategy game with a similar interface and a conquest theme.

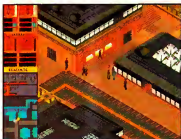
Bullfrog has another hit on their hands, three years in the making, with **Syndicate**. Although simple at first glance, its game play is quite complex and dependent upon individuals' strategy, but still intuitive and flexible as a game system.

It takes place in a world in which mega-corporations own and rule 50 territories that comprise the Earth's continents. These corporations control the populace with implanted CHiPs which

alter their perception of reality so that their lives and environments appear to be better than the depressing reality. Players guide a team of up to four cyborg agents on missions to overtake neighboring territories.

Syndicate starts off slow, but quickly builds to a frenzy as players attempt to take over each territory without a hitch and still stay informed of the world situation. From an overall perspective, **Syndicate** plays a lot like the board game **Risk** as strategists attempt to conquer all of the territories on the map. In **Risk**, battles are resolved with dice throws. In **Syndicate**, the battles come to ultra-realistic life!

Each mission takes place in radically different layouts, but the level of detail stays constantly high throughout. After a



Gamers must direct their troops as they strive to gain control of rival forces.

phase in which the player can upgrade weapons or body modules for each agent from the available cash pool, he sends them into the 3-D terrain and helps them move through the cities, eliminate enemies and reach target sites.

3-D worlds are Bullfrog's forte. **Syndicate** surpasses the realism of even **Populous** and **Powermonger** in its action phase. Players can scroll with the mouse through the picture screen to view the entirety of the area. A radar/overhead map in the lower left corner helps guide

the lost as it points out terrain features and the location of enemy agents and targets.

The upper left corner of the screen contains icons for each of the four agents and health bars. Click on an agent and click on a screen location to move it. Click on a weapon to arm an agent and use a crosshair to shoot at enemies. Players can also move agents as a group, but the missions will quickly demand that agents separate and concentrate on different mini-goals or targets to reach success.

It's very easy to control the combat/action phase, but it's tough to master the strategy to win the game and control every territory. After a few missions, most players will notice the subtle differences that upgrade modules or weapon enhancements make in agent performance in the field. Leg modules increase agent speed, chest modules increase agent armor, etc. In addition to modules and weapon upgrades, players can change IPA (intelligence, perception and adrenaline) settings for each agent during the action phase to affect agent actions. In the strategy parts of the game, money can be spent on research to decrease the development time of newer module versions and weapons, thus creating better agents. The ability to see a direct correlation between the strategy side of **Syndicate** and the action phase keeps the game interesting and addictive.

The sound effects and music are quite tense and exciting, escalating during missions to quicken the heartbeat. Bullfrog balances the soundtrack so that it fits the graphics and keeps players' ears attuned to the onscreen action.

Syndicate is a giant leap forward in special effects for Bullfrog, but their feat remain firmly grounded in solid strategy game play. Fans and reviewers alike will soon want more missions and cities to conquer. Hopefully, Bullfrog will respond quickly.

— Russ Ceccola

THE LEGACY REALM OF TERROR

The Legacy

PUBLISHER MicroProse
DESIGNER Jim Bambra
PLATFORM MS-DOS
THEME RPG
MEMORY 16-25 MB
PLAYERS 1

COMPLEXITY Hard
GRAPHICS 90%
SOUND 86%
PLAYABILITY 81%

OVERALL 85%

Legacy is decidedly the most hard-core in terms of role playing. Like **Alone**, the goal is to free the house of all things evil but the player's perspective is first-person, like **7th Guest** without the fancy scrolling.

The Legacy is played in a Windows-type Interface, although the game does not actually run in Windows. Instead, the player is offered five basic informational windows, three of which can be resized to suit the needs of any situation. The main viewing window can be stretched to cover the whole screen or shrunk down to half an inch square(!). It's all very manageable and shows off the game's graphics quite well. Winthrop Mansion's rooms and hallways have the same vaguely disturbing quality as the Overlook Hotel in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*. The creepily understated musical score is reminiscent of that film as well.

Brad Norris is actually only one of eight preconfigured characters available at **Legacy's** start-up; four male and four female. They range from college kids and entrepreneurs to scholars and Marine Corps vets; however, any and all may be redesigned by the player using an attribute assignment system: skills, knowledge, strength, dexterity. Oh, and that tedious old standby...spells! Yes, this may be a contemporary setting, complete with Smith & Wesson revolvers and kevlar body armor, but surviving this visit is going to require a fair amount of magical ability (You got that, Maj. Kowalski?).

An interesting new addition to this formula is the "fright system," wherein a character may become too frightened to perform certain actions until his or her reason returns. The character's portrait will change to reflect any sudden shock (bug-eyes, hair standing on end), while severe shock may cause the character to go temporarily insane. **The Legacy's** designers went out of their way to ensure that the creatures encountered in the game were truly disgusting and, for the most part, they are. The slimy, moaning zombies shuffling around the first floor are particularly effective.

But, while **The Legacy** may be long on



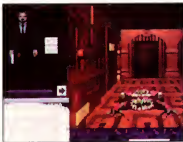
atmosphere, it is equally long on irritations. Supernatural encounters, at first, are meant to be run away from. Until the player has gathered equipment and spells, he will find that death comes all too easily, at which point he may load a saved game or quit to DOS. That's right—no 'restart' option! If there are no saved games, the whole thing must be reloaded, copy protection and all.

Object manipulation is clumsy and, in order to carry more than six objects, a dopey briefcase must be schlepped around, taking up a valuable hand. Unlocked doors must be manually clicked on to open and slam shut after



Many foes will try to halt your progress. To find the secret, you must persevere!

Checking in at number three on the year's Haunted House Game Roster, right behind i-Motion's **Alone In The Dark** and Virgin's **The 7th Guest**, MicroProse's **The Legacy: Realm of Terror** bears some striking similarities to both its predecessors while managing to retain an originality of its own. Of the three "haunties,"



The haunting halls of this old mansion will bring thrills and chills to the player.

being passed through. Honestly, when you're being chased down a corridor by some demon spawn, shouldn't a 'forward' command at a closed door assume that, "Yes, I want to go through?"

Seasoned RPGers will be the ones who get the most enjoyment out of **The Legacy**; it's a large and complex game with a lot going for it, but it lacks the inspired elegance that gave **Alone in the Dark** its wide appeal.

—Scott Wolf



SOFTWARE GALLERY



When Two Worlds War

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| PUBLISHER | Impressions |
| DESIGNER | Edward Grabowski |
| PLATFORM | MS-DOS |
| THEME | Strategy |
| MEMORY | 6 MEG |
| PLAYERS | 1 or 2 |
| | |
| COMPLEXITY | Average |
| GRAPHICS | 84% |
| SOUND | 92% |
| PLAYABILITY | 88% |

OVERALL 88%

Waging war between worlds is a multi-level process.

When *Two Worlds War* is easily the best offering to appear from Impressions Software to date. Long-term strategy players may recognize elements of this design that are similar to other titles, like *Star Legions*, *Overlord*, and *Empire Deluxe*, but these have been blended into an interface that makes *W2WW* unique.

The premise of the game is that the player is the new owner of a Warfare Workstation, allowing the user to oversee all the aspects of interplanetary warfare on a single console. Players will find that their area of conflict has been divided into three 100 x 100 grids, representing their own planet, the enemy planet and the space between them.

Initially, the player will have full knowledge of the home world, but space and

the enemy world will be dark voids until explored. Space provides one of the major barriers to waging the war, as the cost of constructing vehicles with space propulsion is relatively exorbitant. As such, the player designs a limited number of these, provides them with transport capability, and carries the war to the enemy with the land, sea and air capable units riding on their backs.

All units are designated generically as MUs. What sets them apart from each other is the manner in which the player designs them. Every MU is rated for technological ability in ten categories. The ten tech levels are: Land, Sea, Air and Space Speed, Fire Power, Range, Targeting, Armor, Radar and Transport. Tech levels may vary from 0-10 depending on how much research and development the player has devoted to it. One must have acquired the tech level before an MU can be built to use it, but one may always design MUs of lower tech levels when economic conditions dictate such a move. Within the speed categories, units may rate above 0 in more than one, but it is generally better to specialize.

MUs are given orders by assigning them missions. Players may either select from an extensive selection of preset mission types or custom design their own missions and save them to the library for immediate or subsequent use. The latter option is reminiscent of the programming of fighting routines for the super tanks in Origin's *Omega* title. It allows players who are willing to invest the time to maximize the efficiency of their resources and individualize the game in ways that few other titles offer.



Researching and developing new lines of weaponry is vital to overall success.

In addition to building MUs, players must build facilities. There are five types of facilities. Squad Bases house MUs, while Sci-Labs, Mines, Power Plants and Farms form the economic model. Everything is interdependent and players will have to temper their production of MUs



Command your forces with detailed control over all aspects of the war.

with a reasonable emphasis on the support structure they require. Further, a balanced economy may be ravaged by enemy MUs on a strategic bombing campaign. Thus one never really reaches a period of stasis. The economy is a fluid dynamic that requires constant player attention.

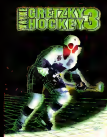
The main display screen is divided into four sections. The largest is a zoomable tactical view which occupies the left half of the screen. Running vertically down the center is a column of command icons, each of which calls up a pop-up sub menu of options. In the upper right corner is a strategic display of the player's choosing, displaying one of the three areas of combat. Below this are three text display windows that update the player on which units and squads are being watched, as well as the progress of new construction. Owners of an Aria Soundcard will also be happy to note that *W2WW* fully supports its speech recognition routines, allowing access to all of the main game menus without further programming.

At the beginning of any conflict, players have the option of using one of the preset scenarios, playing a randomized creation or designing opposing forces on their own. The factors which may be manipulated include the types of planets involved, the composition of their surfaces, the starting tech-level of the opponents, and the number of facilities and MUs one begins with. Additionally, when playing against a computer opponent, the IQ of Red forces may be altered from Very Low to Very High. At the higher levels the computer opponent is challenging, but some players may still opt for the unpredictability of human opposition. For these purists, full modern play is supported.

Given all these options, one can reasonably expect *When Two Worlds War* to be the sole cause of billions of interplanetary deaths in coming years.

— Ed Dille

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— *Computer Game Review* —

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SOFTWARE GALLERY



Ashes of Empire

| | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| PUBLISHER | Gametek |
| DESIGNER | Mike Singleton |
| PLATFORM | MS-DOS |
| THEME | Action/Strategy |
| MEMORY | 4 MEG |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| | |
| COMPLEXITY | Average |
| GRAPHICS | 76% |
| SOUND | 82% |
| PLAYABILITY | 68% |

OVERALL 75%

Try to pull the pieces of a broken nation together.

Ashes of Empire bills itself as a hybrid action/strategy game with a socio-political emphasis. The setting is fictional but there are obvious Eastern European overtones to the work. The player assumes the role of special commissioner of the United Community (UC). The goal is to bring peace to the Confederation of Syndicalist Republics (CSR), one province at a time. Civil war is liable to erupt at any given moment because of the levels of ethnic diversity, nuclear tensions are constantly rising, and there is a limited amount of time to pacify each province.

Each province has many diverse requirements which must be met before this happens. As a rule, these take up several screens of data, including facilities to be built, facilities to be destroyed, voting blocks to acquire within the vari-

ous ethnic groups and so on. Fortunately, the player need not accomplish all of this alone. The game requires the recruitment of professional characters (NPCs) and team building to facilitate victory.

Play begins on a color-coded political map of the CSR. Five Republics are present, each composed of several smaller, semi-autonomous provinces. Darker shaded areas represent higher degrees of ethnic mix, hence greater difficulty in pacification, so the player should initially avoid these provinces. After selecting a province, the player can zoom the map. The player position is marked by a pin, red dots are cities, and other terrain types are self evident. On positioning the cursor over a city, a pop-up window provides its name, the types of buildings it contains, and whether any professional characters are present. Players plot overland travel to that area or may be airlifted there immediately if they have sufficient resources. Airlifts are the option of choice if available, because time is constantly working against the player.

On arrival, the player can leave 3-D overland mode and enter one of the buildings. There are many different types of buildings, from barns to refineries, and each offers different advantages to the player who controls them. On entering, the player meets and attempts to recruit the occupant. Occupants, unlike professional characters, never move around the board and only play supporting roles in the accomplishment of the game's larger objectives.



Don't let the future of your kingdom end up looking like this desolate scene!

There are several ways to recruit occupants. First, the player may meet their stated demands for allegiance. Second, one can use one of eight persuasion techniques. Icons represent actions ranging from exuding charm to threatening bodily harm. Different actions work with different characters but there is no pattern. Two of the eight are always randomly successful. Each attempt takes



A smooth 3-D gaming environment makes the scenario seem lifelike.

one hour of game time, but the player can improve the odds considerably by engaging the occupant in conversation. Each conversation eliminates one of the options and requires 15, then 30, then 45 minutes of game time respectively.

Bringing buildings under control increases the resources that the player has to offer in future trades and may also, in cases like hospitals and forts, help satisfy some of the victory conditions. Radar sites are especially good to control because they help to locate new cities and facilities on the map.

It is impossible to win, however, unless one brings together a coalition of professional characters, each of whom asks a price in terms of team support but offers extensive benefits in return. Some may build hospitals or refineries, others may dismantle forts and bring all military units with a certain radius under the player's control. Either way, players must seek out these professionals and court their services early on to achieve any degree of success.

There is an entire other section to the game, an action vehicle simulation. It has been ignored to this point because its implementation and presentation detracts from the rest of the game. It has a clunky appearance, no intrinsic play value, and one can avoid it altogether with sufficient airlift points.

Another problem is that the complexity of the issues portrayed by the game have been grossly simplified to suit the strategic interface. If one enters this game expecting something serious, like **Crisis in the Kremlin** or **Shadow President**, then disappointment is likely. **Ashes** is better defined as an abstract puzzle-solving game than either a war game or true strategy product, but it will be difficult for fans of those genres to see through the other trappings to appreciate the puzzle they are presented. **Ashes** is a fairly decent game, but it may have trouble finding its audience.

— Ed Dille



High Command

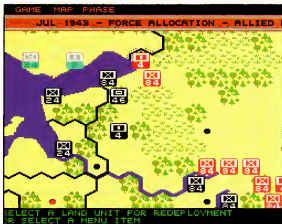
| | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| PUBLISHER | Three-Sixty |
| DESIGNER | Carter, Nonnast |
| PLATFORM | MS-DOS |
| THEME | Simulation |
| MEMORY | 9.2 Meg |
| PLAYERS | 1 or 2 |
| COMPLEXITY | Hard |
| GRAPHICS | 87% |
| SOUND | 90% |
| PLAYABILITY | 85% |

OVERALL 88%

Get involved in WWII's European theater at any level.

High Command was originally offered through direct mail from Colorado Computer Creations. It was a comprehensive strategic treatment of the War in Europe, but it suffered from an antiquated graphics interface, poor sound support and a complex interface. Fortunately, Three-Sixty saw the potential of the design and acquired the title. With the benefit of greater resources, the redesigned **High Command** offers state of the art SVGA graphics and an improved interface without losing sight of the appeal of the original design. Further, enhancements to sound support are evidenced by the fact that it plays each country's national anthem when that country goes to war.

As the Commander in Chief of either the Axis or Allied forces, one may affect



decisions involving the economy, diplomacy, grand strategy and even research and development. The level of involvement in the planning and execution of each of these areas is entirely at the player's discretion.

For example, it is possible to concentrate solely on the functions of the German General Staff and allow the computer to handle all activities of the embassies and economic ministry. Conversely, one can focus every effort into shepherding the economy and researching new weaponry, allowing other elements of the Reich full autonomy. It is worthy of notice that the Computer AI is relatively competent when delegated authority in any area, but it does tend to play conservatively, which is not always the best choice.

Grognards with sufficient stamina may even opt to micro-manage every aspect of the war, despite the fact that it was this very lack of delegation that got Hitler into trouble.

High Command is played on a map that extends from the Ural Mountains to the Central Atlantic in longitude and from the Arctic Ocean to the Sahara Desert in latitude. Thirty-nine countries are represented, but only six are capable of producing new military units as the war progresses: Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Russia and the United States.

The map is hexagon based (hexes may be toggled off) with a representative diameter of 50 miles/hex. Total size is 68 x 72 hexes, which means that the tactical map only displays a small portion of the board at a time. Clicking on any given hex will bring up a digitized black and white photograph of the terrain and a text line describing the weather. A strategic map window is positioned in the upper right hand corner of the display to allow an overview of the theater, but

players will not be able to discern much detail from this display other than political alignment and control of territory.

Below the strategic map is a display of up to 61 command buttons and a direction keypad for scrolling the tactical map. The icons for some of these command buttons change depending on which phase of the turn is active and, since each

monthly turn is comprised of nine phases, were it not for a foresighted design choice by Three-Sixty, things would get confusing very fast. Although it is still necessary to read the rather bulky manual to master the nuances of the system, players can learn the function of any command button simply by moving the mouse cursor over the button. This brings up a short descriptive phrase in the lower right corner of the screen without committing the player to a course of action. Actually clicking on the button gives it the go-ahead.

As such, players who are already familiar with many standard war game rules will be able to intuitively learn many of the functions and begin playing in earnest in a matter of minutes. The possible exception to this rule would be the economic model, which is rather complex and different from what players may have encountered up to this point.

Play begins in any year between 1939 (prior to the invasion of Poland) and 1944, and the player will start with a correct order of battle for the scenario chosen. The player may also invoke several options to explore alternative histories. The Pacific War may be stalemated or even awarded a Japanese victory. Some countries, such as the U.S., Turkey, Spain and Sweden, may be specified to begin as neutrals or their involvement may be randomized. Full or limited intelligence can be selected, the latter imposing more realistic constraints on over-ambitious commanders. Finally, one can impose realistic weather constraints on combat, air operations and logistics. By striking a consistent balance between realism and playability, **High Command** is truly a "Grand" game of strategy for WWII.

— Ed Dille



As the leaders of the military powers of World War II, players must plan ahead.



SOFTWARE GALLERY

REALMS OF ARKANIA

Blade of Destiny

Realms of Arkania: Blade of Destiny

| | |
|-----------|---------------------|
| PUBLISHER | Sir-Tech |
| DESIGNER | Hans-Jürgen Brändle |
| PLATFORM | MS-DOS |
| THEME | RPG |
| MEMORY | 10 MEG |
| PLAYERS | 1 |

| | |
|-------------|------|
| COMPLEXITY | Hard |
| GRAPHICS | 89% |
| SOUND | 88% |
| PLAYABILITY | 94% |

OVERALL 92%

Das Schwarze Auge Macht Viele Spass!

In the United States, the standard of pen and paper role-playing is the **Dungeons and Dragons** series from TSR. While there is nothing wrong with the D&D games, either the conventional or computer versions, it is nice to see a company bring over a conversion that is completely different.

Based on the most popular German role-playing system, **Das Schwarze Auge**, **Realms of Arkania** offers an excellent change of pace for RPG fans.

Lets get one thing straight from the beginning — those players looking for a casual, easy-going RPG...STAY AWAY! While **Realms** is not overly difficult to learn, the manual must be read completely before embarking. (Assuming you have not been previously exposed to this role-playing system. Most Americans

haven't.) There are options to make the set-up and control easier for novices, but this does not decrease the difficulty of the game itself. My recommendation for any inexperienced player would be to: A) Buy the hint book, and B) Try to find a friend to experiment with. Both of these things will make the game much less frustrating.

For advanced role-players **Realms** is an all-out role-playing extravaganza. In the advanced set-up mode, players can modify and control everything from the specific skills of each character to the exact points distributed for each attribute. Also, throughout the game, the player is able to control the increases of magic and skill when levels are raised.

Realms allows up to six characters to adventure at one time. It is important to



All characters in Realms are available as males or females with equal attributes.

choose your character's attributes and archetypes carefully since a balanced party is the key to defeating the game.

Once your party is in place, it is time to go adventuring. The party starts off in a town with plenty of locations to explore and people to talk to. It is a good idea to get your party stocked up on necessities like food and water, as well as the best weapons they can afford, before venturing off into the unknown.

While the game does include such items as a player's diary and automapping, it is a good idea to take notes of your own, and maybe even a rough map. There is a complexity level in this game that requires good organization on the part of the player. Still, if mapping isn't your cup of tea, the automap may be sufficient.

Realms even offers such options as "split team," allowing you to go on two different missions at one time. There are many mini-quests to give your attention to and you must choose your missions carefully.

The graphics in the game are very nice, with the majority of the game presented in a first-person perspective similar to the **Eye of the Beholder** or **Might and**



The view during the combat sequences allows better positioning and strategy.

Magic games. The combat sequences switch to an overhead view, allowing a greater level of strategy and control in battle. The battle sequences are played out a little differently than most RPGs, but should only take a few fights to get used to the controls.

The sound in the game is good and unobtrusive. However, there is the option to toggle the music on and off if it starts to get old.

Most important to a game of this sort, is the playability. **Realms** is more than just playable. It draws the gamer into the world they are exploring. The land is so vast, and there is so much to explore that once the game draws your attention, it is sure to keep it for a long time. There is magic to learn, items to collect, quests to embark on, and a whole lot of cool characters to interact with. Your party will start as six single characters and transform into a group that works together, complimenting each others' weaknesses with opposing strengths. While they may not be real people, they will appear to live and thrive within your computer environment.



The first-person graphics while exploring the towns and dungeons are beautiful.

It is most important to compliment Sir-Tech on their choice of systems to convert. While it seems natural for this game to be brought to the U.S., it took some guts to break their **Wizardry** mold and introduce this game here. Let's hope that it does well and that the sequels come soon.

— Marc Camron

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CD GALLERY

IRON HELI

Created By
DREW PICTURES™

Drew Hoffman
Victoria Cassidy
Richard Lou Cohen
John Andrew Nelson
Erik Marmorek

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Iron Helix

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| PUBLISHER | Spectrum-Holobyte |
| SYSTEM | Macintosh CD |
| THEME | Adventure |
| MEGABITS | 4 MB |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| LEVELS | N/A |
| | |
| COMPLEXITY | Average |
| GRAPHICS | 92% |
| SOUND | 88% |
| PLAYABILITY | 90% |

OVERALL 88%

Stop the savage slaughter and save the universe.

The Cold War of the late 20th century is over. For the moment, at least, humanity has stepped back from the brink of species nuclear annihilation.

Who says the same situation won't occur in the future? An interstellar Cold War is the catalyst for Drew Pictures' science fiction adventure *Iron Helix*. Man must stop a renegade starship before it launches an unprovoked attack on a peaceful planet that will set humanity and the Thanatosians on a military collision course.

The match that threatens to light this cosmic fire is a Terran space force training exercise that goes horribly wrong. A ship, the *Jeremiah Obrian*, abruptly leaves its assigned position and speeds toward the Thanatosian world of Callopie with lethal intent.

The *Obrian*'s crew can't stop or divert the ship. A deadly biological weapon, secretly carried by the ship, has pierced its containment and is infecting the crew members with an incurable disease that suspends vital metabolic functions.

The player must launch probes to the *Obrian*, and, once they gain access, use them to figure out what has happened and stop it before millions of blameless Thanatosians die. You've got a series of three probes with which to complete the four missions that can keep the Cold War on ice for at least a while longer.

The missions are:

1. Find three DNA keys. Only locating and acquiring the DNA of the three highest-ranking officers allows the player to get into important, high-security areas of the beleaguered star ship.
2. Accumulate computer bypass codes. These provide ways for the player to stop the ship's headlong rush to smite Callopie. They are scattered through the ship in the form of video messages left behind by desperate crew members.
3. Eliminate the robot Defender. The

er. Failure to finish in time forces the player to return to the third stage and fight another Defender.

There are three different views on the somewhat crowded main screen. The large window in the upper left corner shows the probe's current location from a first-person perspective. The objects, walls, and corridors are depicted in very detailed, realistic graphics.

The right corner screen shows a top-down view of the probe's current location. Some of the *Obrian*'s decks are almost maze-like, so the overhead vantage point keeps the player aware of the probe's location at all times.

The third screen toggles among three views. They are your position on the ship, the Defender's location, and a three-dimensional view of the entire interior of the craft.

The compass in the lower left corner triggers the probe's on-screen movement. Clicking on a compass point moves the probe in that direction. The tab key switches to a vector-oriented control system which facilitates much more rapid movement in a single direction.

Clicking the appropriate button on the vertical panel that divides the first-person view from the overhead display initiates other actions. The probe can scan for DNA, interface with computers using a robot arm, and jam the Defender's sensors to avoid an attack. When specific actions like opening doors or operating elevators are possible, choices appear in the right corner display, replacing the standard view.

The sound is as impressive as the visuals. These elements combine to keep tension at the nail-biting level, as the probe explores rooms and corridors.

While the plot and story are sophisticated, it doesn't threaten the likes of *Asimov*. Still, it is well conceived and effectively implemented. Wholly original games remain scarce for Macintosh CD. *Helix* is the most important release since *Spaceship Warlock*.

— Frank Laney Jr.



The probe must be maneuvered with skill and intelligence in order to win.

defense system of the *Obrian* is fully activated. It tries to destroy any intruder, including the probe!

4. Execute the plan. The player has five minutes to use the codes to stop the *Obrian* before it releases a new Defend-



Robo Aleste

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| PUBLISHER | Tengen |
| SYSTEM | Sega CD |
| THEME | Shooter |
| MEGABITS | N/A |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| LEVELS | 8 |
| | |
| COMPLEXITY | Hard |
| GRAPHICS | 93% |
| SOUND | 94% |
| PLAYABILITY | 92% |

OVERALL 93%

A major new sci-fi shooter arrives on the Sega CD!

The long-awaited Sega CD edition of the Mega CD super-shooter, **Nobunaga and His Ninja Force**, has blasted onto U.S. shores with Fuusha-shuriken flying. Dubbed **Robo Aleste**, this science fiction insta-classic combines sizzling graphics, a superb musical score, and an intriguing retro-futuristic setting, to produce the best game of its type available on the Sega CD.

Robo Aleste is based on an interesting, if fanciful, premise: What if they had gigantic warrior robots in medieval Japan? It's 1543 AD and Nippon is hopelessly enmeshed in a civil war that has already lasted generations, when an unidentified ship drifts ashore on a small Japanese Island.

The vessel appears to be a

steam-powered, flying gunboat, and deep in its hold are huge mechanical warrior robots. Spurred by the discovery, Japanese scientists soon begin producing more of the Robo Warriors, or Dennin, as well as their own version of the airborne gunboats.

The Dennin stand approximately 25 feet high and are controlled by an internal human pilot. On each shoulder, they carry a powerful turbo-electric engine which serves as a power source for both the Dennin's weapon systems and their silent, high-speed flight capability.

The storyline then jumps ahead a dozen or so years to a point where the Dennin technology has been widely adopted by the various warring clans. Lord Oda Nobunaga, leader of the Oda faction, suddenly finds his clan at the brink of destruction when his only ally, Saito Dosan, is assassinated by his own son. Seizing this opportunity, an alliance of six clans under Mori Motonari, attack Nobunaga, whose armies soon fall beneath the combined and overpowering might of the enemy.

Now it's all up to the player, cast as



games, such as **Truxton**, but the soft earth tones of the 16th century Japanese landscape and the Japanimation styling of the robots and human characters (who appear occasionally in pop-up windows) give this game a visual grandeur all its own.

The various stages take the player over an impressive variety of terrain, including a jewel-encrusted mystery cave and a battle with a heavily armed weapon transport train. Bosses include a blue mechanoid capable of launching flash fires and tornadoes, and a huge, golden robot armed with lasers and flame throwers.

The musical score is an amazing blend of techno-pop and more traditional cinematic themes. When the citizens of a small Oda village leave their thatched huts to cheer on the player-character as he passes overhead, while an inspirational theme song is played in the background, it's almost enough to make one want to enlist.

The action is fast, furious, and occasionally frenetic, with gamers able to set the Dennin's travelling speed. There are a nice selection of power-ups, including a two-pronged laser weapon dubbed the Raisen-ha and the extremely cool Fuusha-shuriken, which sends destructive, green flames in up to eight different directions. With a little bit of luck, and plenty of practice (sorry, no passwords), Aleste may even wind up saving old Nobunaga's bacon.

Frankly, the Sega CD needed a game like **Robo Aleste**, with its strong visuals and superior play action, almost as much as Nobunaga. Even though the kingdom of Sega is far from falling, the CD-based software has been firing mostly blanks since its launch. What's required now are more titles like this; games that play well and offer visual appeal.

Robo Aleste has done its part.

— Bill Kunkel



These gigantic robots are capable of heavy firepower and quick moves!

Nobunaga's first officer, Aleste, to command the latest incarnation of Robo Warrior technology – the Dennin Ninja of Hakuga – and save the clan.

While the story line is interesting, its main impact on the actual game is the visual contrast produced by setting a war fought with futuristic super-weapons against the simple topography of medieval Japan. The juxtaposition works amazingly well, giving **Robo Aleste** a look that is both unique and spectacular. The game's vertically-scrolling, topdown perspective suggests earlier Genesis



With an admonition from your leader, you've got orders to beat the enemies.



CD GALLERY



Day of the Tentacle

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| PUBLISHER | LucasArts |
| SYSTEM | MS-DOS CD ROM |
| THEME | Graphic Adventure |
| MEGABITS | N/A |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| LEVELS | N/A |
| COMPLEXITY | Average |
| GRAPHICS | 94% |
| SOUND | 96% |
| PLAYABILITY | 96% |

OVERALL 96%

"Let's do the Time Warp Again!" — Riff Raff

To throw all of the cards on the table at once, the reason I hold such a fondness for this game and for the original **Maniac Mansion** is because of the sense of humor that the designers involved in the game have. That and the fact I always wanted to blow up a hamster in a microwave, but by the time I owned my own microwave oven I was too old for such disgusting, juvenile behavior. Thank you, LucasArts.

Day of the Tentacle is the sequel to **Maniac Mansion**. A sequel that outshines the original in almost every way.

The only character that has made the transition between games is everyone's favorite nerd, Bernard. This time, Bernard is joined by Hogle, a roadie for a heavy metal band, and Laverne a medical student who is...let's just say a bit



You can help Green Tentacle without letting Purple Tentacle go free... NOT!

odd. Together they make up the cast of this wild and crazy adventure game.

It seems that one of Doctor Fred's creations, the maniacal Purple Tentacle, drank some toxic waste and transformed into a Super Tentacle bent on world domination. Now it is up to Bernard and his friends to travel through time and stop the toxic-transformation from happening.

The time travel devices are converted port-o-potties know as Chron-O-Johns. (Which is even more amusing when transferring items to other characters across time. Flush 'em!) Characters must travel through the past, present, and future to keep Purple Tentacle from taking over the world.

The quest itself goes off on several strange tangents that, for the sake of surprise, won't be covered here. But rest assured, there are tons of things to do and many different characters to interact with. The game keeps all of the humor of the first installment, even though it was made a little more clean-cut and political-ly correct.

This game is the first from LucasArts to be released both on disk and CD at the same time. The games are the same except for the audio. The CD game is the second of LucasArts' so called, "talkies," incorporating speech throughout the game for all of the characters' lines. This brings a better realism to the



Stuck in the past with some awesome famous dudes. What's a roadie to do?

game itself, as well as allowing the programmers to better relay the desired emotions if good actors are chosen.

Richard Saunders (Les Nesman on WKRP in Cincinnati) plays the voice of Bernard and it is the exact voice you would expect from the nerd. The other voices are also appropriate, though sometimes the acting is overdone, particularly on Hogle.

The voices, with the CD quality sound and intermissions, increase the enjoyability of the game and make it truly worthy of a CD translation, unlike so many of the games out there right now.

The graphics are also a major improvement for this game. The animations are fluid and the characters and backgrounds are so well painted that the player gets the feeling of playing a cartoon rather than a computer game. The introduction is long and interesting and further enhances the motion picture feeling of the game.



Use caution in the future world which is filled with, and run by, tentacles.

The game play is also smooth and easy to control. Anyone familiar with other recent LucasArts adventure games like **Indiana Jones** will have no problem with the point-and-click icon based interface. The story moves at a good pace and the ability to switch between characters has been made simple and that ability keeps the game from getting boring. All of the characters must complete certain tasks before the game can be finished. Programmers also included a complete version of the first **Maniac Mansion** game on the Commodore 64 computer in Weird Ed's room, just for fun.

Perhaps the most important factor of an adventure game is the story. If the story or characters are uninteresting, no one will care enough to play the game. LucasArts has created a winner through their hilarious characters and plot. Let's hope subsequent installments of **Maniac Mansion** can keep up the tradition.

— Marc Camron

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PORTABLE PLAYTIME



Paperboy II

| | |
|-------------|-----------|
| PUBLISHER | Tengen |
| SYSTEM | Game Gear |
| THEME | Action |
| MEGABITS | 2 |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| LEVELS | 3 |
| | |
| COMPLEXITY | Average |
| GRAPHICS | 80% |
| SOUND | 65% |
| PLAYABILITY | 85% |

OVERALL 75%

Hey—it's not just a job, it's a paper route.

With this revamping of *Paperboy*, Tengen captured the spirit of the arcade game while making significant improvements upon the original Game Gear release.

The first thing gamers will notice is that they can play as either a paperboy or papergirl. The choice doesn't affect game play; it just adds long hair to the on-screen figure to denote a papergirl. The summary screen, at the end of the game, also changes to reflect the player's choice of gender.

The premise is the usual; deliver papers to the strangest neighborhood in the world while avoiding the people and things who live there. The old 'hood isn't as lawned as it used to be. Gone are the killer lawn mowers, kamikaze tricyclists, and spinning breakdancers who blocked

the sidewalks of yesteryear. Instead of threading a tedious obstacle course on the sidewalks, players can concentrate on paper throwing accuracy at targets on the right and left sides of the screen.



Think tossing papers onto porches is easy? You've got a surprise waiting!

Paperboy II has a great deal of the twitch feel of the arcade game. Fast moving targets come from the left, right, and top of the screen, endangering the paperboy/girl if not dispatched with a well aimed missile. Being quick on the trigger is not always enough, though. One high speed Dalmatian usually runs harmlessly past. But if struck with a paper, the dog spins and runs in the opposite direction, often barreling directly into the paperperson's bicycle. Quick players may jump over the dog (and most other things) by pressing the 1 and 2 buttons simultaneously. Pressing them separately throws papers to the right or left, respectively.

Graphics have improved considerably in the two years since the release of *Paperboy*. The colors are bright and clear, and on-screen characters are well defined. Even the fastest moving objects are sharp edged and easy to see. The protagonist is rendered well and missiles look like rolled up newspapers, not the long, thin, white sticks that represented papers in the first game.

The sound is an unfortunate step back from *Paperboy*. While that game's

soundtrack at least tried to be interesting, *PB II*'s soundtrack quickly grates on the nerves. There's no music-off option. But since there are no sound effects to speak of, gamers won't miss anything by just turning the volume all the way down.

The gamer delivers papers on three different levels. Easy Street consists of six houses arranged with three houses on either side of a business district, park, or used car lot. These areas often have many targets and obstacles in them. Medium Way adds six more houses arranged in the same manner and Hard Road adds another six.

Where *Paperboy* had subscribers' houses interspersed among a number of non-subscribers' homes, *Paperboy II* begins with all homes subscribing and cancelling their subscriptions when the *Paperboy* misses his appointed stop, or breaks a window. Since the only way to win bonus lives is through perfect delivery (having no non-subscribers and



The bonus-heavy obstacle course is also included in this portable version.

delivering papers to all of them), gamers may ignore the window dressing scoring system and concentrate on making accurate deliveries. Fortunately, there is a training course where the player may practice throwing, jumping, and riding.

Paperboy II is a solid, simple, but challenging game that will keep Game Gear fans happy for some time to come.

— John Hardin

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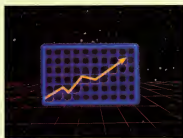
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KUNKEL REPORT

Cinema of the Interactive

by Bill Kunkel

Way back in the days when CD-ROM was still mostly theoretical, the silicon soothsayers plied us with visions of the wonders this new technology would bring. Primary among its virtues, we were assured, would be the CD's ability to create interactive movies in which the user would be cast in a role that might ordinarily belong to Harrison Ford, Clint Eastwood, or Arnold Schwarzenegger.

"After all," the reasoning went, "when they make a movie, there's always tons of footage left over—footage they'll be able to fit on CD!" At the time, it sounded somehow reasonable.

Then the dawn began to break, and questions arose. What about CD-ROM's extended access time? And sure, there's always lots of unused film footage after a shoot, but it's mostly multiple takes of a scene or special effects sequences that just didn't turn out as impressively as the director had hoped. Even in those special "Director's Cut" editions of films that boast about all the re-inserted footage that was missing from the original version, if as much as ten minutes of new material is added, that's a lot.

Movies, like novels, TV shows, comic books, and other great art forms, are linear. They have a beginning, a middle, and an end. In making a movie, they don't shoot a dozen alternate versions of each scene. Electronic games, on the other hand, are largely non-linear. Their appeal is the games' open-ended nature, an artificial universe in which the player-character can explore locations and interact with NPCs (non player-characters).

Why do you suppose, for example, that so few professional novelists, screenwriters, etc., have been able to translate their skills to game design? Because in their art, they control everything. The characters go where the author directs them and do what he or she wants them to do. In a game, those decisions are handed over to the player. The idea of

characters running around, doing whatever the heck they please, frightens most authors to death. When traditional writers try to design a game, the plotlines they produce invariably resemble those twist-a-plot books that have pretended at interactivity for about a decade.

I spoke recently with a film veteran who had just attended an expensive seminar on creating interactive movies. She was able to synthesize what she got for her money down to one sentence: "Multiple beginnings, multiple middles, and multiple endings."



Robert Culp and Grace Zabriskie star in Philips' *Voyeur*, a cinematic CD-i tale.

Now, spending a lot of money to receive a single sentence worth of wisdom is a dubious enough prospect, but when that single piece of advice is such unalloyed bushwah, it's time we all smartened up—Movie makers know how to make movies; game designers know how to design games.

Interactive movies should not consist of generic plotlines with a couple of parallel openings, a few variant middles, and two or three alternative endings. This is the cinematic equivalent of a twist-a-plot adventure, but it is neither a game nor a movie.

The idea of characters running around, doing whatever the heck they please, frightens most authors to death.

Throughout the history of electronic gaming, attempts have been made to produce interactive movies. They have almost all failed for one of two reasons: either they weren't very good games or they weren't very good movies.

Cinemaware was a game publisher whose entire product line was based on the concept of interactive movies, and they probably did it better than anyone else at the time. But many of Cinemaware's best games (such as *Defender of the Crown*) weren't very cinematic, and the most cinematic products (like *King of Chicago*) weren't very good games. Occasionally, however, the combination did work (as in *It Came from the Desert*, and *Rocket Ranger*), giving players a brief glimpse into the possibilities inherent in this genre.

Sometimes, a game such as Acclaim's Genesis and SNES versions of *Alien³*, captures a single sequence from a film and reproduces it skillfully, magnifying it into an entire game. But rarely does a game reproduce the experience of actually being in a film, with a story, other characters, and a strong cinematic focus.

We may be on the way.

One thing that interactive movies have always lacked has been star power. This is being quickly remedied, however, with Robert Culp appearing in Philips' *Voyeur* for the CD-i, and Margot Kidder (along with several major Hollywood superstars currently in negotiation) doing a star turn in *Under a Killing Moon* scheduled from Access later this year.

Interactive cinema is one of the toughest types of electronic games to pull off. The trick lies in creating a plot that is both sufficiently open ended yet has game-like parameters. That means that the teams who create these games must employ designers who are skilled both as story tellers and as game creators. Until the "interactive" and "cinema" portions of these projects are afforded equal priority, interactive cinema will remain a lofty ideal, rather than a strong software category.

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THE JURY

Without question, our reader-jurors put heart and thought into their reviews, and this month's contest elicited some strong entries from players who know what they want—and don't want—in a baseball cart. Here are two who said it most compellingly.

Tony LaRussa Baseball

EA Sports
Genesis
1-2 Players

Winning Review
David Yamada

Tony LaRussa Baseball is a tantalizing tease: At first, it appears to be the baseball game with everything.

In many ways, **LaRussa** delivers the kind of performance that one might expect from a disk-based game on a fancy computer system. The game plays smoothly. It includes all 26 major league teams and two All-Star teams from the 1992 season, with real players rated on their actual statistics. There are features galore: One-player or two-player mode; simulation or arcade style play; hit, pitch and field, or just manage; single game, short season, or full season replay.

The graphics are solid, if unspectacular. The audio highlight is a fine imitation of a ballpark organ.

However, a major limitation of **LaRussa** is that it won't save individual players' statistics in its cartridge memory. For

replay buffs, this is unthinkable. If **LaRussa** is to advance cartridge baseball gaming to the next level, then it must add a stat-save option. A trade feature would be nice, too.

In sum, **LaRussa** is a Rookie of the Year effort, a fine addition to EA's outstanding Genesis sports line. It is a stat-save option away from true All-Star status.

Runner-Up Review
Jonathan Coats

With previous baseball games from Sega, Tengen and Ballistic, Genesis owners never starved for baseball action. However, Electronic Arts recognized the lack of a "great" simulation and now steps up to bat with **Tony LaRussa Baseball** in an attempt to blast a home run where others merely managed base hits.

Electronic Arts crammed a maximum amount of game play into their new slug-



An over-the-catcher perspective allows for quick and easy fielding decisions.

ger. **LaRussa** dazzles the gamer with detailed graphic mini-screens (pitcher warm-ups, etc.), mesmerizes him with thorough player statistics and abilities, and challenges his savvy and stamina with realistically difficult ballplay and extended seasons and playoffs. Naturally, **LaRussa** presents all true Major League teams and players, allows stadium choices, and offers the ubiquitous Instant Replay. These and many more

items create a list of custom options diverse enough to make each sitting a new gaming experience.

Unfortunately, **LaRussa's** complexity gives it the personality of the class intellectual: cold, serious and calculating. The animation sometimes appears choppy, the crowds rarely shout enthusiastically, and the character controls often react clumsily. Certainly, **LaRussa** beats all previous Genesis baseball efforts, but it doesn't ace the "fun test" and, consequently, misses the home run mark by a hair.

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1. All reviews must be of the nominated game.
2. Entrants can submit only one review of each game.
3. All submissions become the property of **EG**.
4. Reviews should be 200 words or less, typed double-spaced.
5. The month's best review, as determined by **EG** editors, earns the writer the currently available video game of his or her choice (sorry, no Neo-Geo carts).
6. The contest is open to anyone who has not sold professionally to **EG** within the previous 12 months (exclusive of this contest).

Game for Contest #13:
Street Fighter II Turbo/Capcom/SNES

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...and don't forget to tell us what video game you'd like if you are the winner!



Tony's game features actual players from baseball's major league teams.



PLAYING IT SMART

Defining Excellence

by Joyce Worley

There are enormous quality differences in educational software. They range from no-frill, economy drill and practice programs (expensive at any price, since the kids don't enjoy using them), to adventure-styled state-of-the-art tutorials that use all the sound and graphic tricks top designers can muster.

Novotrade, a Palo Alto development house, brought their bag of tricks, along with a great deal of creativity, to two special educational products this year. Each, in its own way, defines excellence in the art of tutorials.

Peter Pan: A Story Painting Adventure (EA*Kids/Macintosh, MS-DOS) makes such bright and amusing use of the Peter Pan myths that children will want to play it over and over. Each time they use the program kids from 6 to 10 will be practicing and improving their reading skills, as well.



Kids can help Peter Pan defeat the scheming Captain Hook and company.

The adventure starts when Peter discovers that Wendy is missing. He sets out to find where the pirates have taken her, with plans to rescue her from their evil clutches. Tinker Bell accompanies him on the journey.

Along the beautifully illustrated way, Peter encounters many problems and mishaps. Each time he comes to a prob-

lem, he turns to the screen and asks, in a well-done piece of speech programming, the gamer to help him out.

The gamer has a paintbox of tools to get Peter out of his scrapes; Sally Sprayer spray paints solutions to Peter's problems; Jazz Painter brushes colorful magic; Winston Whoosh erases; and Nick Lead draws helpful objects. There's also Sandy the Hourglass, which turns back time to the previous scene; Mark Bookmark to save your place, and a book that allows the gamer to go to any scene.

Faced with a hazard or obstacle, Pan turns to the gamer and says, "Give me a hand here, Joyce." The paint box pals put up quite a squeal and holler, "Take me, try me, I can help," accompanied by animations of each waving, jumping, and trying to attract the player's attention.

Each pal performs his own brand of tricks for each obstacle, which leads the child to play the same scene over and over to see all the possibilities.

Peter Pan boasts sound, speech, music, and graphics equivalent to most top-drawer adventures, with an added level of originality thus far unequalled in learning software. It almost seems too good to be educational, but it is the best edutainment program for early readers so far.

Richard Scarry Busy Town (Paramount/MS-DOS, Macintosh) brings a peak of sophistication to the prereader crowd, ages 3-7. Based on the *Busy World of Richard Scarry* books, it's a masterpiece of embedded teaching cloaked by charm and grace.

The main menu is an overhead picture of Busetown, with twelve separate locations to visit. The child moves the on-screen cursor, an apple-shaped helicopter piloted by Lowly Worm, to each location, then the scene changes to that playground.

Each playground has its own activities, with a special educational message. Bananas Gorilla requires navigation of a maze and simple arithmetic to get the

fruit to the gorilla. Bruno's Deli practices color and shape recognition, matching words with pictures as Huckle Cat waits on customers. Delivery Truck practices classification of objects, Dr. Diane's Hos-



The familiar characters found in Richard Scarry's books will help children learn.

pital teaches body parts and word matching. Gas Station teaches counting, matching and estimating. Mr. Fixit gives some rudimentary instruction in pulleys, gears and machinery, and The Wind lets the child experiment with the wind and a ship, Mr. Frumble's hat, and balloons. Each of the other activity areas have similar motives for the play sessions.

Every on-screen activity is conducted at a child's pace that may make adults impatient, but they're appropriate for youngsters who'll enjoy seeing the animations unfold. And, the entire thing is created in Scarry-style drawings, with lots of primary colors.

The music score is fabulous. There are 13 original songs that vary in tempo all the way from rap to reggae. And, all instructions are verbalized for non-readers.

There have been lots of click-and-point explorations for kids, but **Busytown** brings a new level of experience to the very young, with pleasant activities, good sounds, and beautiful surroundings.

For the lucky kids who get these programs, learning is secondary to the fun, making these two great teachers.



TEST LAB

Freedom of Choice

by Ed Dille

In the early days of video gaming, players were limited to the original controllers that came with the system they purchased. While some controllers were better than others, it became apparent that all of them could be improved upon.

Capcom did a service to the entire industry with the introduction of **Street Fighter**, because the game confirmed that kids were sophisticated enough to remember multiple button combinations. As a result, cartridge developers are designing more controller intensive games and peripheral manufacturers are scrambling to keep control with innovative new designs. The most recent additions to this trend are programmable pads and six-button controllers.

Because virtually every major manufacturer of video game peripherals will premiere new controllers between now and Christmas, it would be impossible to cover all of them in a single column. As such, *Test Lab* will divide this coverage over two or more months.

Please note that the absence of coverage for a given product often means that an evaluation sample has not been made available for testing. If you wish to see coverage of a particular controller other than those presented herein, your comments and suggestions are welcome care of our *Feedback* department.

The first controllers of note this month are Acclaim's **Dual Turbo Wireless** systems for the Super NES and Genesis. The units come packaged with two controllers and an infrared receiver which plugs directly into both connectors on the front of the console. The individual

controllers are a conventional three- or four-button design (Genesis and SNES respectively) but do feature turbo and slow motion buttons between the control row and the directional pad.

Each controller is powered by 4 AAA alkaline batteries, which provide 40-50 hours of continuous use under normal conditions. Excessive use of the special features of the controller will reduce this estimate considerably. There is an independent on/off switch for each controller, as well as a light which indicates whether one is player one or two. The controllers operate within a 25 foot line of sight from the receiver. The packaged system will retail for \$59.95.

Another alternative controller worth mentioning is the **Power Pad-TILT**, the latest addition to the Champ line from A Dan America. The controller is designed to take advantage of the concept that many users tilt the game controller in the direction they wish to go when they are playing games. As such, the **Power Pad-TILT** employs similar technology to IMN Control's Gamehandler joysticks to translate tilting of the pad into conventional rocker pad commands. The rocker pad is still present because the tilting function may be turned off if desired.

Whereas IMN Control accomplished this affect through mercury switches, the A Dan America unit uses a ball bearing tube assembly. The latter adds a little weight to the unit, but the user is rewarded with more defined tactile feedback. Some games benefit from the special feature more than others. *Four-way* directional games, like the *Zelda* series, are easy to manipulate, but the unit really shines in driving games like *Road Rash*.

The face of the control pad is similar

to the **AsciiPad**, with independent turbo selectability for all of the fire buttons, but the body is more swept back and the directional pad has been rounded. A Dan America has retained the angle of attack used by the original **Power Pad**, based on positive user feedback on that unit. The **Power Pad-TILT** will appear at a suggested retail of \$24.95.

A Dan America is also working on a six-button and a programmable pad, but neither was available for evaluation at the time of this writing.

The first programmable pad to arrive at *Test Lab* was the **SN Programpad**, from STD (a Sega unit will be available later this year but will not come with pre-programmed moves). Appearing at \$53.95, the SNES unit offers autofire, slow motion, a standard six-button layout and three special buttons for accessing programmed moves. These buttons are crescent shaped and arrayed in three sections around the XYAB pad for quick manipulation. One flaw of this arrangement is that, if the player has large hands, one may push one of the central buttons by accident while attempting to access one of the crescent controls.

Programmed moves are stored in one of twelve modes and the player may freely switch between modes in the course of the game. The modes are divided as follows: Normal 0-9, Program 1 and Program 2. The first 10 modes contain pre-programmed combinations for **Street Fighter II** and **Fatal Fury** as shown in the accompanying chart. These modes are permanently installed and cannot be erased.

In the A1 button of the Normal 0 mode, the player will find a secret code that allows selection of any character

Capcom did a service to the entire industry with the introduction of *Street Fighter*, because the game confirmed that kids were sophisticated enough to remember multiple button combinations.

from Street Fighter II and then have that character battle against himself.

The pre-programmed moves assume that the player is fighting from the left side. If the player is fighting from the right side, however, the actions can be mirrored by holding the directional pad to the left while pressing the action button.

The other two modes store player-input combinations. Interestingly, the SN Programpad uses a real time programming approach. Essentially, the memory is like a tape recorder that faithfully records as many button inputs as the

trouble extending the use of the controller beyond those titles. Conversely, if one already plays like Chuck Norris, then the SN Programpad will streamline the playing style to CyberNorris, with a corresponding reduction in hand fatigue.

Suncom Technologies has adopted a different method of programming for their new **CyberPad** controllers. In essence, the CyberPad records any combination of

then hit button Y."

The Cyberpad is also noteworthy because the onboard CMOS micro controller allows the entire pad to be programmable. What this means is, one may move the functions of the A and B buttons to the left and right rocker switches if that combination better suits ones playing style for a given game. As another example, if one is used to flight stick type control of up and down, one may shift the functions of the top and bottom rocker switches to duplicate that feel. This flexibility allows the

player puts in about 3 seconds, and their sequence is displayed on a very nice LCD control panel. When accessed, the stored combination plays with the same delays it recorded. What this means is, if the player has trouble performing a given action move to begin with, then this controller will not correct that shortfall. For this type of player, the pre-programmed moves will be very helpful for the two games supported, but one may have

three inputs and replays those inputs in a burst. Directional commands may be included but note that diagonal movement counts as two of the three allowed inputs. By adopting this approach, the CyberPad is more user friendly for players who have trouble performing combination moves, but it is also incapable of replicating moves which require a delay in the sequence, like "hold down button B for 2 seconds,

player to personalize the controller to a particular playing style rather than modifying the style to accommodate the idiosyncrasies of new games. The unit saves these modifications even when turned off by using an alkaline battery (AAA) as an alternate power source. Cyberpads also feature rapid fire buttons which allow up to 27 shots per second. They are available for both the SNES and the SEGA Genesis at a suggested retail of \$39.95.

PREPROGRAMMED MOVES FOR SN PROGRAMPAD

Game Mode Character

| | | |
|-----|---|-----------------|
| SFI | 0 | |
| SFI | 1 | Ken/Ryu |
| SFI | 2 | Ken/Ryu |
| SFI | 3 | Guile |
| SFI | 4 | Dhalsim |
| SFI | 5 | Zangief/Chun Li |
| SFI | 6 | Blanka/Honda |
| FF | 7 | Terry |
| FF | 8 | Andy |
| FF | 9 | Joe |

A1

| |
|-------------------------|
| Secret Code |
| Dragon Punch |
| Double Hit Dragon Punch |
| Sonic Bomb |
| Yoga Fire |
| Spinning Clothesline |
| Rolling Attack (Both) |
| Screwdriver |
| Acrobat Kick |
| Cyclone Punch |

A2

| |
|-----------------------------------|
| Four Hit Flash Kick (Guile) |
| Fire Ball |
| Double Hit Fire Ball Combo |
| Flash Kick |
| Yoga Flame |
| Spinning Pile Driver |
| Double Hit Rolling Combo (Blanka) |
| Napalm Punch |
| Elbow Smash |
| Rocket Kick |

A3

| |
|--------------------------|
| Hurricane Combo (Ken) |
| Hurricane Kick |
| Kick Fire Ball |
| Sonic Combo |
| Torpedo |
| Whirlwind Kick (Chun Li) |
| Stun Throw (Honda) |
| Flash Kick |
| Windmill Punch |
| Flame Kick |



LORE

Sega Genesis and Sega CD Secrets, Volume 5

Rusel DeMaria & Jeronimo Barrera, Prima Publishing, 416 pages (softbound, \$12.95)

Continuing his tradition of concise, comprehensive coverage of major video game titles, Rusel DeMaria returns after a hiatus of one numbered edition of this series of hintbooks (possibly to do the other work reviewed on this page). He is joined this time by game analyst Jeronimo Barrera, with acknowledged help from a team of other players who help provide the tips and secrets for a variety of specialized game areas.

The book title is also expanded with this edition to include the Sega CD. There are eight CD games, in addition to 16 Genesis titles, with a full chapter devoted to each. Games covered are, for the Genesis: *Battletoads*, *Chakan the Forever Man*, *Cool Spot*, *Ecco the Dolphin*, *Flashback*, *Jennifer Capriati Tennis*, *Outlander*, *Risky Woods*, *Road Rash*, *Shining Force*, *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*, *Sports Talk Football '93*, *Street Fighter II: Championship Edition*, *Streets of Rage 2*, *World of Illusion* Starring Mickey Mouse & Donald Duck and *X-Men*. The CD games are: *Black Hole Assault*, *Cobra Command*, *Night Trap*, *Prince of Persia*, *Road Avenger*, *Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective*, *Time Gal* and *Wonder Dog*. As with previous titles in the *Prima's Secrets of the Games* line of books, there is a final chapter devoted to short tips (mainly passwords, some for extra lives or bonuses) for a variety of games.

Each chapter starts with a title screen from the game and a brief descriptive box noting game type, difficulty level, number of players and save-game options. A paragraph titled "What's Going On?" describes the basic plot line or theme. This is followed by general strategies, tips or a run-through, depending on the game, all well illustrated with

b&w screen shots or sequence maps (no line drawings or sketches). Frequently the chapter ends with a few key secrets, such as passwords to different levels.

—Ross Chamberlain



The most popular Sega carts and CDs are explained in full with tips and tricks.

Prince of Persia: The Official Strategy Guide

Rusel DeMaria, Prima Publishing, 262 pages (softbound, \$19.95)

Young Prince, if thy sword arm's a bit rusty, or perhaps thy luck is as elusive as one's grip on a crumbling ledge, fear not! For the astute Grand Poobah of Prima Publishing hath faithfully recorded the proper passage to defeat Jaffar and reclaim the Princess. Twice.

Prince of Persia: The Official Strategy Guide chronicles events in both installments of this software favorite. Typically, running and jumping games have not fared well on computers. Broderbund—and designer Jordan Mechner—helped *Prince* rise above the

rest by empowering the player-character with an enormous repertoire of fluid body motions against a detailed 3-D landscape. Consequently, the game successfully draws players into the action and in empathy with the central character.

DeMaria has wisely adopted a similar approach in his treatment. Rather than presenting levels of the game in third person, (i.e., go to point A, jump three times, etc.) he employs first-person narrative. By telling the story through the eyes of the on-screen character, he is faithful to the mood of the original and capitalizes on players' existing association with their alter-ego. Well-scripted dialogue embellishes encounters with Guards or other NPCs. When third-person detachment is absolutely necessary, a "translator" adds unobtrusive notes.

Pen and ink sketches and screen captures illustrate points in the text. These are pieced together seamlessly, where appropriate, to let the reader see the relationship of numerous screens simultaneously. If alternative paths are explored, the player is shown how to return to the main branch when further benefit is not attainable. Finally, the layout of the illustrations complements the numbering system used in lieu of sub-heads, saving the reader from having to digest long unbroken chunks of text.

Roughly half of the book is devoted to each title, and a short appendix chronicles some basic play tips that are applicable to both. For example, one sword fighting technique that will help the player to avoid counterattacks is to develop a rhythm of step-parry-thrust-parry. It's important to measure distance by watching sword tips, and the player is warned of the unpredictability of certain opponents in *Prince of Persia 2*.

The appendix addresses salient points that would have disrupted the flow of the main body. As such, players who arm themselves with the knowledge of this definitive work ensure that the fortunes of Allah will smile upon them.

— Ed Dille



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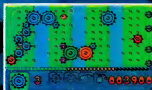
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